

MAURITANIA

UNHCR OPERATIONAL UPDATE

As of 15 August 2016

HIGHLIGHTS



Following registration, a displaced family fleeing recent violence in northern Mali settles in Mbera camp. UNHCR/I.Bocoum

- In July, **32 newly displaced** sought refuge in Mauritania following the eruption of **interethnic violence in northern Mali**. Most of the refugees originate from the Mali-Mauritanian border town of Nampala. UNHCR registered and assisted them to settle in Mbera camp.
- Between 25 and 28 July, an **extensive Non-Food basic Items distribution** took place in Mbera camp. UNHCR distributed more than 17,000 rugs, buckets and jerry cans, more than 82,607 soap bars, more than 23,000 mosquitoes net and more than 13,000 basins.
- On 5 August, in Mbera camp UNHCR launched ceremony for the tree planting campaign “**a refugee for a tree**” in the presence of the local authorities, UNHCR, IOM, SOS Desert, WLF and Intersos. Music group “Tefleust” played songs for the environment, encouraging participants to start tree planting.

Population of concern (as of 1 August 2016)

A total of **43,286** people are assisted by UNHCR in Mauritania

Malian refugees in Mbera camp	41,459
Urban refugees and asylum seekers	1,827

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 August 2016)

11,449

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

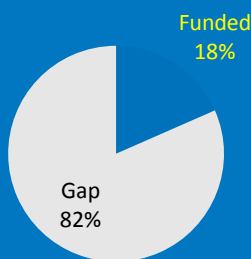
30L

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.

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 were accommodated in Mbera camp.

In collaboration with the Mauritanian Government which has kept its borders open to new influxes, UN organizations and national and international NGOs, UNHCR continues to lead the humanitarian response for **41,459 Malian refugees in Mbera camp**. In addition, the organization protects and assists **1,414 urban refugees and 413 asylum seekers**, mainly from the **Central African Republic, Syria and Côte d'Ivoire**.

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 obligation of the Mauritanian and Malian states towards refugees in both countries of origin and asylum.

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 unstable. 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 at Mbera Camp. Some **112 new arrivals** from Mali have been registered in **2016**.

Achievements



Protection

Achievements and Impact

- **32 persons** sought refuge in Mbera camp in July, after fleeing interethnic violence in northern Mali. Most of them were displaced from the Mali-Mauritanian border town of Nampala. They were registered and received assistance in the camp.
- In July, **five new cases** of sexual and gender-based violence were identified. Among them, a rape victim was referred to MSF for medical assistance. Overall, 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.
- **671 people with specific needs**, particularly people living with physical disability and elderly, **received tailored assistance** for food and other basic items' transportation during July's general food distribution.
- In July, UNHCR facilitated a **training in Asylum and International Refugees Protection** in Mauritania for the **local authorities** and the military in the region of Tarza which is key for movements towards and from Senegal. **80 officers** took part in this training.



New arrivals are assisted by UNHCR to settle in Mbera camp following recent clashes in northern Mali. UNHCR/I.Bocoum

Durable Solutions

Achievements and Impact

- In early July, UNHCR facilitated the voluntary repatriation to Cote d'Ivoire for a single mother with three children who found refuge in Mauritania following the 2011 crisis. The woman had expressed the wish to be reunited with her family in Abidjan where she is planning to start a small business activity. The 4 returnees were assisted with a plane ticket as well as some financial support to facilitate their repatriation.
- During the same period, UNHCR facilitated voluntary repatriation to Central Africa of three families who had found refuge in Mauritania in 2012. The 8 returnees were assisted with a plane ticket as well as some financial support to facilitate their repatriation. UNHCR offices in Mauritania and Central Africa coordinate their efforts in order to ensure the best possible conditions of return for the refugees, given the current level of insecurity which still affects the country.

Education

Achievements and Impact

- In July, **1,280 students** started attending **compensatory sessions** for the summer period in the **6 primary schools** of Mbera camp. These sessions involve the participants in July and August to help them to catch up with regular school programmes in October. The activity is key in promoting “**Education for All**” and **girls’ inclusion** in the camp, ensuring that no one is left behind.



Students in Mbera camp. UNHCR/A.Dragaj 2016

Health

Achievements and Impact

- In July, **20 patients** 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**. From 20 to 23 July, during the general food distribution in Mbera camp, all refugees received a **food ration** composed of **rice, oil, and pulses** as well as a **nutritional supplement (CSB)** representing a total of 2,100 kcal per person/per day, alongside with cash. A special livelihood and **food security experts committee** was mobilized on this occasion to monitor the impact of the newly established food distribution system. 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

- In July, works continued for the **construction and rehabilitation of more than a thousand toilets** in the camp. 50 new toilets were constructed, for a total of 105 new toilets between June and July. Another 220 existing toilets have been rehabilitated.
- 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 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).
- 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 July, through this participatory approach, **56 water points were fenced** to protect them from livestock incursions and avoid waste. **Drainage systems** for 128 toilet and 34 water points were **improved** and drainage system was put in place for 22 common laundries. **112 community cleaning** and **135 jerry can cleaning sessions** took place during the month. This activity aims at improving water quality in order to prevent the spread of water borne diseases in the camp.
- An “**open theatre**” initiative took place in July for community sensitisation. 24 theatre performances as well as 31 film projections were displayed in the streets of Mbera.

Shelter and Non Food Items

Achievements and Impact

- A general Non-Food Items distribution took place between 25 and 28 July: UNHCR distributed more than **17,000 rugs, buckets and jerry cans**, more than **82,607 soap bars**, more than **23,000 mosquitos’ nets** and more than **13,000 basins**.
- In July, operations started in Mbera camp for the distribution of **2,968 shelters**, in partnership with the World Lutheran Foundation (WLF). The operation is part of an ongoing plan to replace deteriorated shelters in the camp.



A refugee woman collects buckets during the July NFI distribution in Mbera camp. UNHCR/I.Bocoum

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The ongoing shelter replacement plan will only cover the needs for about 3,000 families, though it is estimated that an additional 4,500 shelters will need to be replaced in 2016.

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 vegetable, mostly for direct consumption but also for sale (about 20% of the production). In July,

in preparation of the wet season, a **campaign for proper water storage and gardening** uses took place followed by seeding in 5 gardening areas.

- In Mbera camp, UNHCR carried out an initiative to complement moderate malnutrition treatment (CRENAM), whereby **233 persons with specific needs received a goat** and some animal feed. The activity is part of UNHCR livelihood programme, in partnership with SOS Desert, to improve food security.
- In July, UNHCR conducted a **local market survey** to identify current price tendencies and availability of basic goods. The survey revealed a market tendency towards a slight price reduction for food items such as wheat, millet and rice in the area of Bassikounou. This survey was part of UNHCR regular efforts to evaluate the accessibility of food and other basic items at local level.

Peaceful coexistence

Achievements and Impact

- To strengthen peaceful coexistence between refugees and the host community in the Bassikounou region, UNHCR and its partner SOS Desert continue to carry out projects improving life-conditions in the villages surrounding the camp. In July, **544 improved woodstoves and 140 ploughs** were distributed to the populations of four villages in the Bassikounou and Fassala boarder area. Rehabilitation of two local well was completed in the area of Fassala and Dhar. In addition, a **capacity building outreach** in the field of pacific coexistence, conflict resolution and human rights was carried out by experts from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the International Organization for Migrations (IOM) and Intersos for the benefit of 10 local committees.
- On 5 August, in Mbera camp, UNHCR marked the launch of the second phase of the tree planting campaign “**a refugee for a tree**” during a ceremony that gathered local authorities and humanitarian organisations involved, namely UNHCR, IOM, SOS Desert, WLF and Intersos. On this occasion, the renowned group of refugee musicians “Tefleust” entertained participants with songs for the environment, encouraging guests to start tree planting. 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 Hakim (Governor) of the region of Bassikounou participates in the tree planting campaign launched by UNHCR. UNHCR/I.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\$ 3.6 million** received from the [Government of Japan](#) and [ECHO](#).

US\$ 15.9 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.

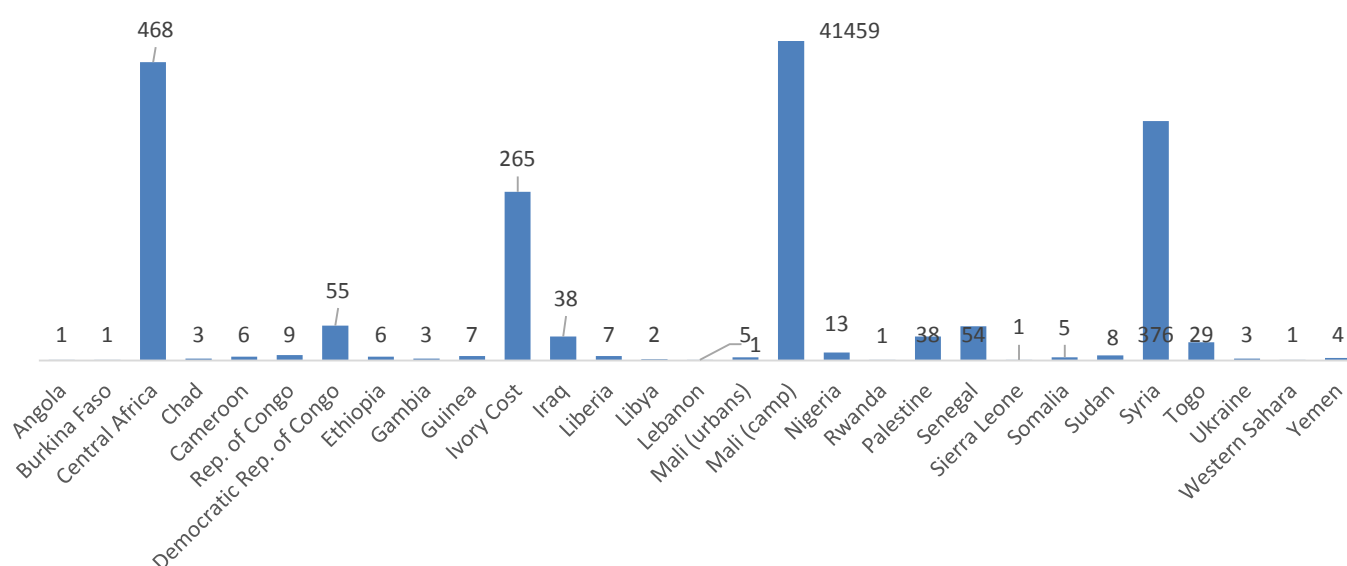
Major donors of unrestricted and regional funds to UNHCR in 2016 (in USD):

[United States of America \(181 M\)](#) | [Sweden \(78 M\)](#) | [Netherlands \(46 M\)](#) | [Norway \(40 M\)](#) | [Australia \(31 M\)](#) | [Priv Donors Spain \(25 M\)](#) | [Japan \(24 M\)](#) | [Denmark \(24 M\)](#) | [Canada \(16 M\)](#) | [Switzerland \(15 M\)](#) | [France \(14 M\)](#) | [Germany \(13 M\)](#) | [Italy \(10 M\)](#)

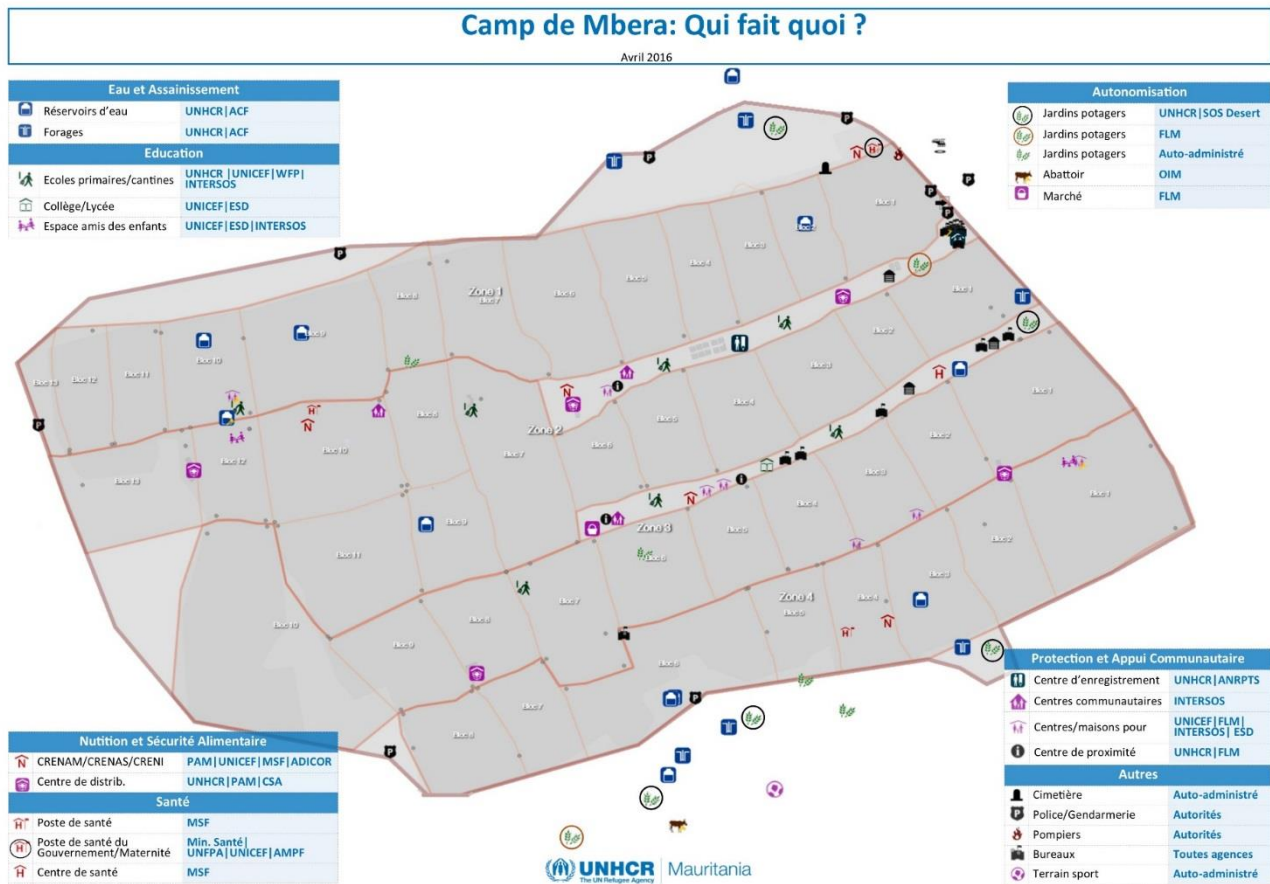
Other donors of unrestricted and regional funds to UNHCR in 2016:

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



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



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:

