

MAURITANIA

UNHCR OPERATIONAL UPDATE

As of 15 June 2017

KEY FIGURES

298

Voluntary returns to Mali facilitated in 2017

5,971

New arrivals from Mali since September 2016

5,588

Malian refugees with specific needs (as of 1 June 2017)

13,976

Malian households in Mbera camp (as of 1 June 2017)

30L

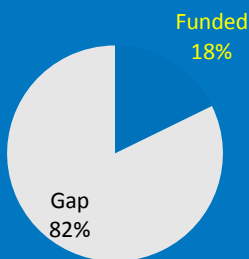
of potable water available per person per day

FUNDING 2017

USD 19.4 M

Requested for the operation

3.4 M Funded



PRIORITIES

- Protect and assist urban refugees and Malian refugees in Mbera camp;
- Promote refugees' self-reliance.
- Support peaceful coexistence between refugees and their host communities

HIGHLIGHTS

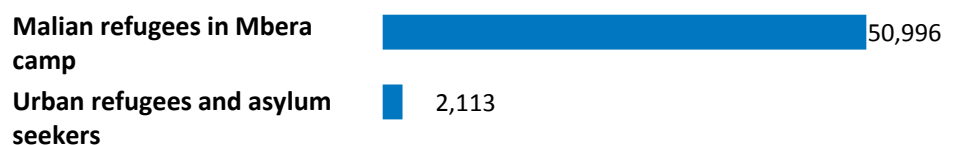


New arrivals from northern Mali wait to be registered in Mbera camp ©UNHCR/ Helena Pes 2017

- Influxes of Malian refugees to Mbera camp continue at a steady stream. In the past 9 months, over 5,900 people crossed the border from Mali; this is the largest influx of Malian refugees observed into Mauritania since 2013.
- In May, due to funding shortfalls to WFP budget, refugees in Mbera camp received only a reduced ration of the standard food basket distributed by WFP. In 2017, increased numbers of arrivals have not been met with additional funding and thus food assistance rations have fluctuated between 50 per cent and 90 per cent of the planned ration (2,100 kcal per day).
- Between April and May, UNHCR and its partner LWF distributed 478 shelter kits to families who recently arrived in Mbera camp. In addition, 21,900 cups and 27,500 sleeping mats were distributed during May general distribution. All women aged from 12 to 49 received sanitary kits.

Population of concern (as of 1 June 2017)

A total of **53,109** people are assisted by UNHCR in Mauritania



UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

Operational Context

In Mauritania, UNHCR provides protection and assistance to **50,996 Malian refugees Mbera camp**, in south-eastern Mauritania, and to **1,520 urban refugees and 593 asylum seekers** (mainly from the Central African Republic, Syria and Côte d'Ivoire) registered with UNHCR in Nouakchott and Nouadhibou.

UNHCR works closely with Mauritanian authorities to **enhance the protection environment for refugees and asylum seekers in Mauritania**, notably through the development and implementation of a national asylum law. 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.

UNHCR continues to lead the humanitarian response for all Malian refugees in the camp, in collaboration with the Mauritanian Government which has kept its borders open to new influxes and in cooperation with other UN agencies and national and international NGOs. Mbera camp was established 50 Km from the Malian border in the Hodh ech Charghi region in 2012, when violent clashes in North Mali triggered important waves of displacements to Mauritania. Despite the conclusion of a peace agreement in Mali in June 2015, security conditions in northern Mali deteriorated and large-scale returns of refugees are not yet contemplated. In June 2016, Mauritania, Mali and UNHCR concluded a **Tripartite Agreement** which provides a framework to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of Malian refugees, when conditions will allow, and reconfirms the commitments of the Mauritanian and Malian states to protect refugees.

Achievements



Protection

Achievements and Impact

- Inflows of new arrivals from Mali continued in May at a steady stream; since the beginning of this new influx in September 2016, over 5,800 people have crossed from Mali to Mbera camp. Newly arrived families reported fleeing insecurity and armed groups from the areas of Timbuktu, Gundam, Niafunke, Tenenkou, Niono, Mopti and Segou.
- In May, **92 women**, including female community workers, female household representatives and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) survivors, participated in a sensitization campaign and focus group discussions on preventing and responding to sexual and gender based violence. UNHCR and its partners involve the refugee community to prevent and fight gender-based violence in Mbera camp and provide adequate protection and assistance to survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, including early marriages. In May, three new SGBV cases have been identified and documented while 30 survivors received home visits and psychosocial counselling.
- In May, six separated children were reunited with their family members in the camp with the support of UNHCR partner INTERSOS. During the period, 19 children at risk received support for registration. UNHCR and its partners identify, document and assist children at risk in Mbera camp.



New arrivals from northern Mali seek assistance at UNHCR premises in Mbera camp ©UNHCR/Helena Pes 2017

- During May's general food distribution in Mbera camp, UNHCR and its partners helped **542 people with specific needs**, such as elderly and people living with disability to collect their ration and relief assistance. In addition, **7 vulnerable families** were assisted with cash.
- UNHCR continues to provide protection and assistance to urban refugees and asylum seekers in the cities of Nouakchott and Nouadhibou. In May, 190 people with specific needs received cash assistance. UNHCR also covered healthcare cost for 171 urban refugees.

Education

Achievements and Impact

- The percentage of girls attending primary school in Mbera camp is almost equal to that of boys. UNHCR and its partner continue to sensitize children and their parents to achieve Education for All and increase girls' inclusion at school. In Mbera camp, **5,346 children** are enrolled in 6 primary schools.
- To reduce adult illiteracy in Mbera camp, UNHCR supports **literacy programmes** in the three main languages spoken in the camp. In May, **200 adults**, mostly women, attended literacy courses in Tamasheq, Arabic and Fula.



Children at school in Mbera camp ©UNHCR/Helena Pes 2016

Health

Achievements and Impact

- In May, **35 patients from Mbera camp** were referred to Nema and Nouakchott hospitals. UNHCR and its partner, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) ensure **medical evacuations** of refugees and host community patients who cannot be treated in the camp, such as oncology and surgery cases.

Food Security and Nutrition

Achievements and Impact

- In May, due to funding shortfalls to WFP budget, refugees in Mbera camp received only a reduced ration of the standard food basket distributed by WFP. In 2017, increased numbers of arrivals have not been met with additional funding and thus food assistance rations have fluctuated between 50 per cent and 90 per cent of the planned ration (2,100 kcal per day). Since October 2016, 65% of the food ration is distributed in cash, while the remaining in-kind portion of the food ration (35%) consists of rice and vegetable oil weighing 275 g/person/day. UNHCR works with partners to improve access to gardening fields and livestock, to reduce refugees' dependency on food assistance.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Due to significant gaps in funding, there is very little food or cash resources available for 2017. Refugees in Mbera camp are overwhelmingly dependent on humanitarian assistance. Reduced food rations, combined with new waves of arrivals, have placed a further strain on the already very scarce local resources. Due to food pipeline breaks, an increase in the number of admissions to malnutrition centers in Mbera camp has already been observed this year.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR with its partner *Acción Contra el Hambre – España* continue to ensure that **all refugees in the camp have access to clean water and sanitation facilities** including latrines. **166 new latrines** were constructed and handed over to the community.
- In May 2017, **hygiene, hand washing and sanitation campaigns** were organized in the camp. All latrines were disinfected with the help of the refugee-led WASH committees, under technical guidance of ACF-E. UNHCR and ACF-E continued to improve the community participation in WASH activities: **23 drainage** systems were cleaned up by the community, **17 latrines** were rehabilitated through a participatory approach.
- 28,470 people** in Mbera camp were reached through **mass sensitizing** activities such as door to door discussions, community meetings as well as clean-up campaigns to raise awareness on water and sanitation and prevent the spread of waterborne diseases.
- UNHCR in partnership with SoSDesért continue sensitization and waste management activities to improve waste collection in Mbera camp. In May, SOS-Desért launched a campaign for the distribution of 1,500 garbage cans serving 15,000 households.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Many of the four-year old infrastructures in Mbera camp need to be replaced. About 50% of semi-permanent latrines in Mbera camp have reached their maximum storage capacity in 2016. Despite efforts to replace and construct new toilet facilities, UNHCR lacks resources to build permanent latrines. Harsh climate conditions, such as strong winds contribute to the fast deterioration of facilities in the camp.

Shelter and Non Food Items

Achievements and Impact

- In May, UNHCR and its partner LWF rehabilitated some infrastructures in the camp, including hangars and the transit center for new arrivals, the registration centre and the corridors of the 5 distribution centres in Mbera camp.
- Between April and May, UNHCR and its partner LWF distributed **478 shelter kits** to families who recently arrived in Mbera camp. In addition, 21,900 cups and 27,500 sleeping mats were distributed during May general distribution. All women aged from 12 to 49 received **sanitary kits**.



Women collect hygiene kits in Mbera camp ©UNHCR Mauritania

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- According to the ongoing shelter replacement plan, an estimated **4,500 shelters**, having expired their 3 years lifespan, need to be replaced.

Self-Reliance

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR continues to carry out a self-reliance strengthening programme to reduce refugees' dependency on humanitarian assistance in Mbera camp. In May refreshment sessions were organized for income-generating activities holders in the camp. 90 holders participated in the 3-day session.
- To strengthen sustainable livelihoods and resilience for refugees in Mbera camp, UNHCR carries out a livelihood programme in partnership with local NGO SOS-Désert. In May, within this programme, the NGO carried out a campaign to distribute 35 tons of animal feed in support of 32 milk and dairy products units. UNHCR through its partner SOS-Désert also distributed charcoal to improve access to energy for **1,200** vulnerable people.



Animal feed distribution in Mbera camp ©UNHCR Mauritania

Peaceful coexistence

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR and its partners continue to sensitize both refugee communities and their host populations in the surroundings of Mbera camp about peaceful coexistence, sustainable use of shared natural resources and conflict prevention: in May, a mass-sensitisation campaign on peaceful coexistence was organized to sensitize communities in Mbera camp and surroundings about the use of water points for livestock. 474 people, including 261 women took part in the initiative.
- In May, UNHCR, in conjunction with OHCHR, IOM and partnering NGOs LWF and INTERSOS carried out a joint mission to 3 municipalities of the Bassikounou administrative area, namely Megve, Fassala and Dhar to set up **8 villages' committees for peaceful coexistence**.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Resources and pastures are limited in the semi-arid region of Hodh ech Chargui. Five years on, the protracted situation places a further strain on Mauritanian host communities, who should also be supported. Development actors need to increase their intervention in the area.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

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. UNHCR also participates in the United Nations 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 2017 amount to **US\$ 3.4 million** received from the **Governments of Japan, Canada and Italy**.

US\$ 16 million is still requested for UNHCR's operation in Mauritania in 2017.

UNHCR is also grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with unearmarked and broadly earmarked funds in 2017.

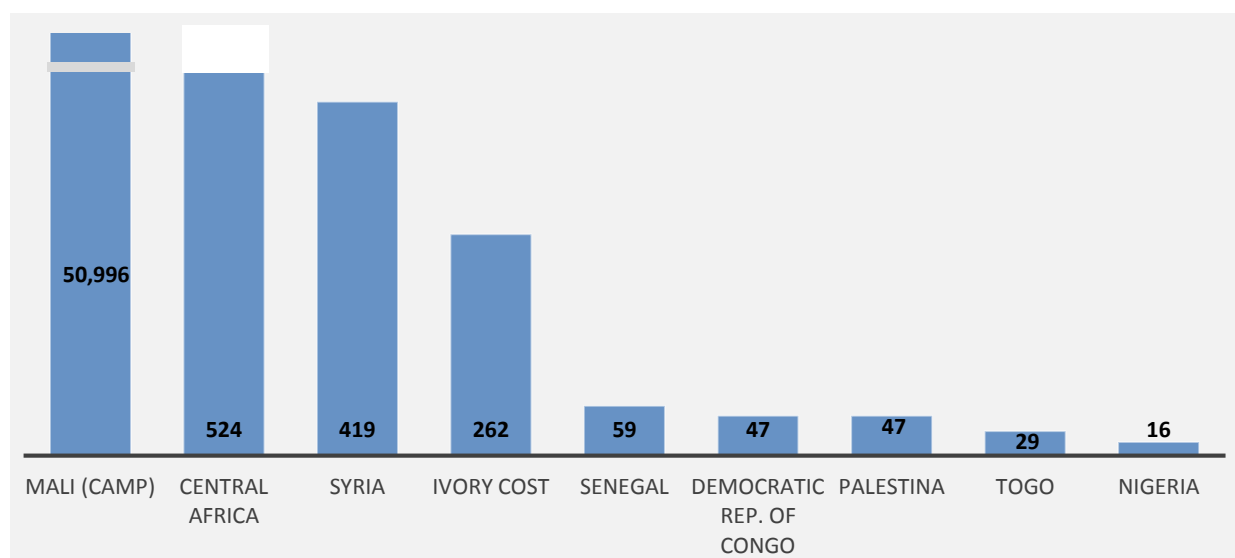
Major donors of unrestricted and regional funds to UNHCR in 2017 (in USD):

United States of America (95 M) | Sweden (76 M) | Netherlands (52 M) | Norway (41 M) | Priv Donors Spain (24 M) | Denmark (23 M) | Australia (19 M) | Canada (16 M) | Switzerland (15 M) | France (14 M) | Germany (12 M) | Priv Donors Republic of Korea (12 M)

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

Algeria | Austria | Belgium | Bosnia and Herzegovina | Chile | Costa Rica | Estonia | Finland | Iceland | Indonesia | Ireland | Korea | Kuwait | Lithuania | Luxembourg | Malta | Monaco | Morocco | New Zealand | Qatar | Singapore | Sri Lanka | Thailand | Turkey | United Arab Emirates | Uruguay | Zambia | 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:

