

KEY FIGURES

298

Voluntary returns to Mali facilitated in 2017

5,813

New arrivals from Mali since September 2016

5,558

Malian refugees with specific needs (as of 5 May 2017)

13,883

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

30L

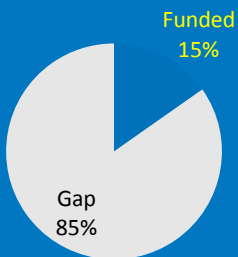
of potable water available per person per day

FUNDING 2017

USD 19.4 M

Requested for the operation

3 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

MAURITANIA

UNHCR OPERATIONAL UPDATE

As of 15 May 2017



UNHCR donates a stock of drugs and medications to Bassikounou health center in the presence of the local Prefect (Hakeem).

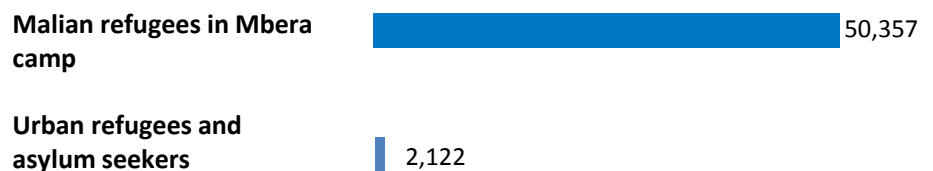
Photo ©UNHCR/Henri-Sylvain Yakara

HIGHLIGHTS

- In April, UNHCR assisted 76 Malian families who had expressed their intention to leave Mbera camp and return to Timbuktu. UNHCR coordinated efforts with its office in Mali to ensure that the returnees receive protection and assistance. These are the first requests of voluntary return facilitated in 2017.
- Influxes of Malian refugees to Mbera camp continue at a steady stream. In the past 8 months, over 5,800 people crossed the border from Mali; this is the largest influx of Malian refugees observed into Mauritania since 2013.
- In April, UNHCR donated a US \$ 28,000 worth stock of drugs and medications to the Bassikounou health center. This donation will improve the health center's capacities to respond to the basic medical needs of the local population and refugees living in the area.

Population of concern (as of 1 May 2017)

A total of **52,479** people are assisted by UNHCR in Mauritania



UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

Operational Context

In Mauritania, UNHCR provides protection and assistance to **50,357 Malian refugees Mbera camp**, in south-eastern Mauritania, and to **1,513 urban refugees and 609 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 April 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. More than 600 people were registered in Mbera camp in April. Newly arrived families reported fleeing insecurity and armed groups from the areas of Timbuktu, Gundam, Niafunke, Tenenkou, Niono, Mopti and Segou.
- UNHCR supports the Mauritanian Government to establish a national asylum system. In April, UNHCR conducted a training for the National Consultative Commission for the Refugees (CNCR) to review refugees' status determination procedures and standards. UNHCR is currently working to include all authorities who regularly come in contact with the refugee population, such as security forces, police and local authorities into training activities.
- UNHCR and its partners continue to **fight gender-based violence** in Mbera camp, identifying survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, including early marriages, and providing adequate protection and assistance. UNHCR and its partners regularly organize events involving communities to prevent sexual and gender based violence: in April, a sensitization campaign and focus group discussions involved **73 women** including female community workers, female household representatives and sexual and gender-based violence



A family is assisted with documentation in preparation of return to northern Mali. Photo ©UNHCR/ Henri-Sylvain Yakara

(SGBV) survivors. During the month, six new SGBV cases have been identified and documented; 21 home visits were carried out to assist survivors of SGBV and child marriages as well as a separated child.

- During April's general food distribution in Mbera camp, UNHCR and its partners helped **538 persons with specific needs**, such as elderly and people living with disability to collect their ration and relief assistance. In addition, **7 persons living with disability** were assisted with cash and crutches to ease their mobility in the camp.

Durable Solutions

- In April, UNHCR assisted **76 families** of 298 Malian refugees who had expressed their intention to return to northern Mali. The families left Mbera camp and were assisted to return to the area of Timbuktu in coordination with UNHCR office in Mali.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The security situation in northern Mali is not conducive for voluntary returns of Malian refugees. UNHCR does not promote returns but facilitates the spontaneous voluntary return upon an individual request by the refugee.

Education

Achievements and Impact

- In Mbera camp, **5,049 children** are enrolled in **6 primary schools**. To improve school attendance, children receive **daily meals** in the canteens of the 6 primary schools, as well as **child friendly spaces**. This activity is organized jointly by UNHCR and the World Food Programme (WFP). Thanks to joint sensitisation efforts, the school attendance in April improved from 73% to 74%.
- To reduce adult illiteracy in Mbera camp, UNHCR supports **literacy programmes** in the three main languages spoken in the camp. In April, **200 adults**, mostly women, attended literacy courses in Tamasheq, Arabic and Fula.

Health

Achievements and Impact

- In April, **28 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.
- In April, UNHCR donated a stock of **essential drugs** worth about \$ 28,000 USD to the governmental health centre in Bassikounou. This donation will help the health centre to respond to the basic medical needs of the local population and refugees living in the area. The local prefect (Hakeem) expressed his gratitude for this donation.



UNHCR donates a US \$ 28,000 worth stock of drugs and medications to Bassikounou health center. Photo ©UNHCR/ Henri-Sylvain Yakara

Food Security and Nutrition

Achievements and Impact

- In April, due to funding shortfalls to WFP budget, refugees in Mbera camp received only a reduced ration of the standard food basket distributed by WFP. 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

- 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. Water quality control in the camp is carried out regularly at all levels (households, standpipes, storage tank). A total of **3,260 water tests** were conducted in April to ensure quality compliance to humanitarian standards.
- In April 2017, **20 hygiene and sanitation campaigns** and **64 hand washing 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.
- 14,978 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.
- In April, **29 new sites** for solid waste disposal were set up in the camp under the supervision of UNHCR's partner ACF-E.



Hand washing sensitization is key to prevent the spread of water born diseases in Mbera camp. Photo courtesy ©ACF-E/ Mamoudou Lamine Kane

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 April, UNHCR and its partner LWF distributed **78 shelter kits** to families who recently arrived in Mbera camp.

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 April, 46 youth who participated in specific technical and professional training received starter kits to launch their activities as **mechanics, tailors, blacksmiths, restaurant managers, carpenters** and **electricians**. These kits are assets of an income-generating project to strengthen refugees' self-reliance.



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 April, 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. In addition, **175 people** participated in a **football match** organized in Mbera camp to sensitize communities in peaceful coexistence.



A herder patiently waits his turn at a water point in Mbera camp.
Photo courtesy ©ACF-E/ Mamoudou Lamine Kane

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 million** received from the **Government of Japan and the Government of Canada**.

US\$ 16.4 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.

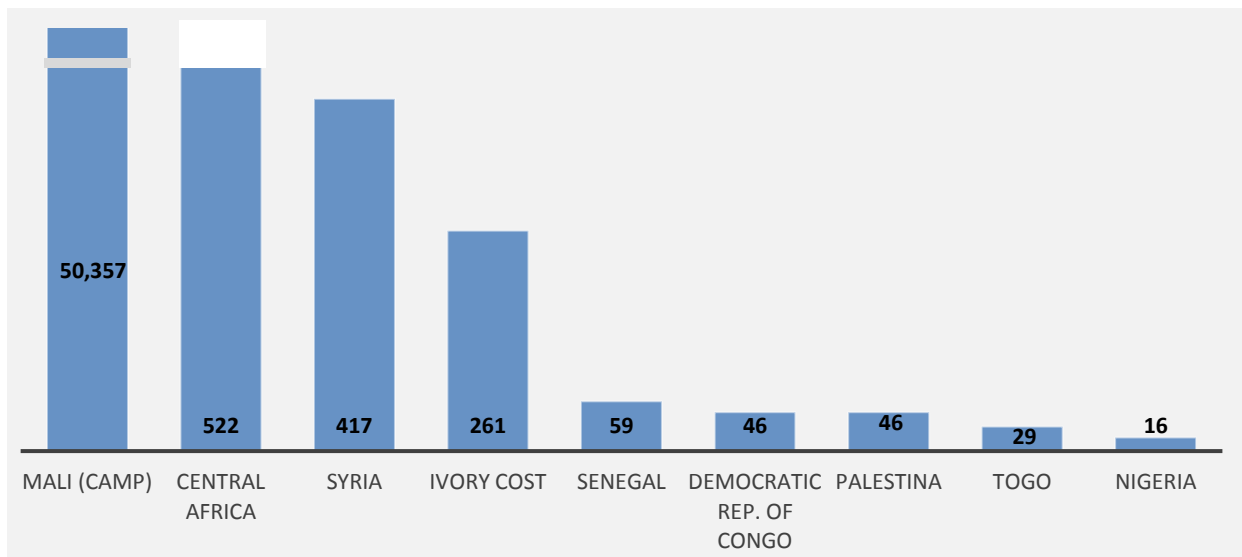
Major donors of unrestricted and regional funds to UNHCR in 2017 (in USD):

United States of America (95 M) | Sweden (76 M) | Netherlands (52 M) | Norway (41 M) | Denmark (23 M) | Australia (19 M) | Priv Donors Spain (18 M) | Switzerland (15 M) | Germany (12 M)

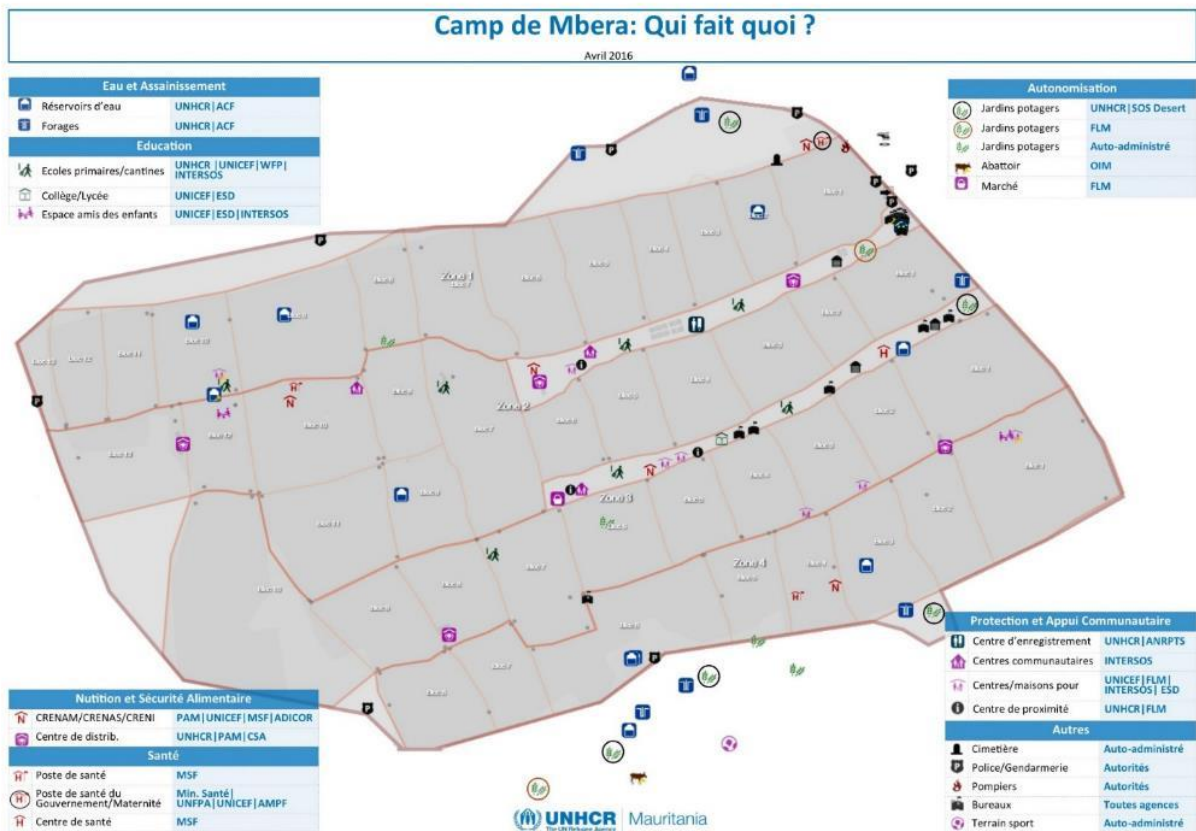
Other donors of unrestricted and regional funds to UNHCR in 2016:

Algeria | Austria | Belgium | Bosnia and Herzegovina | Canada | 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.org portal



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Links:

