

MAURITANIA

UNHCR OPERATIONAL UPDATE

February 2015

KEY FIGURES

15,091

Malian households in Mberra camp

5,635

Malian refugees with specific needs

3,571

People de-activated since December 2014

32L

Of potable water available per person per day in Mberra camp

22

Persons per latrine in Mberra camp

FUNDING

USD 24.4M

Requested for the operation

**Funding gap
100%**

PRIORITIES

- Maintain protection and assistance for all Malian refugees in Mberra camp.
- Pursue the de-activation exercise (some 18,000 cases to be reviewed by the Joint Review Commission).
- Strengthen support to refugees' self-reliance.
- Reinforce peaceful coexistence between the refugee and host communities.

HIGHLIGHTS

- As of 28 February, UNHCR in Mauritania protects and assists 52,402 Malian refugees in Mberra camp and 758 urban refugees and 591 asylum seekers of various nationalities in Nouakchott and Nouadhibou.
- In February, 51 432 Malian refugees in Mberra camp (14 796 households) received food during the monthly distribution organized by UNHCR through its implementing partner, the *Commissariat à la sécurité alimentaire*.
- Owing to a funding shortage faced by WFP, the food ration distributed to Malian refugees in Mberra camp on a monthly basis was reduced in February. Urgent funding is needed to enable the distribution of a sufficient quantity of food in 2015.
- UNHCR, through its partner INTERSOS, continues to support primary school education in Mberra camp through the payment of incentives for education staff. In February, sociocultural events were organized in the six primary schools in the camp to promote primary education.
- From 9 to 21 February, a Child Protection mission from UNHCR headquarters was conducted in Mberra camp to provide training and technical support to UNHCR and its partners.
- In February, UNHCR through its implementing partner INTERSOS, conducted home visits to more than 452 individuals with specific needs in Mberra camp and 12 victims of sexual and gender-based violence.



Population of concern

A total of **53,751** people are assisted by UNHCR in Mauritania

Malian refugees in Mberra camp

52,402

Urban refugees and asylum seekers

1,349

UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

Operational Context



Mberra camp S. Laroze Barrit/UNHCR- January 2015

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 occurred, thus further stretching the limited resources available in the area. In collaboration with the Mauritanian Government, UN organizations and national and international NGOs, UNHCR leads the humanitarian response for 52,402 Malian refugees in Mberra camp. In addition, the organization protects and assists 758 urban refugees and 591 asylum seekers, mainly from Cote d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic and Senegal.

Since June 2013, UNHCR has been observing a small number of spontaneous returns to Mali. However, despite efforts to stabilize the country, including the deployment of a peacekeeping force and the presidential elections in mid-2013, the humanitarian and security situation in Mali remains fragile. Large-scale returns of refugees are therefore not yet envisaged and UNHCR and its partners are maintaining their presence in Bassikounou/Mberra camp to continue the humanitarian response and ensure preparedness in case of a new influx, should the situation deteriorate.

Achievements



Protection

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR continues to cooperate with the authorities on the development of a National Asylum Law that will result in a national legal framework and national governmental bodies regulating the presence of refugees and asylum seekers in Mauritania. This in turn will facilitate enjoyment of a range of human rights, including fair access to asylum, freedom of movement, access to formal employment, quality health care and education. In this respect, UNHCR organized a two-day workshop in February in Nouakchott with Government officials to review and finalize the draft national asylum law.
- In February, UNHCR, through its implementing partner, INTERSOS conducted home visits in Mberra camp to 452 individuals (294 women and 158 men) with specific needs (including, among others, women and children at risk, single parents, unaccompanied or separate children). Home visits enable UNHCR and its partners to better assess the needs of the population and to counsel them on the services available in the camp. In addition, two focus group discussions with refugees were organized regarding access to essential services for persons with specific needs in the camp.

- UNHCR, through its implementing partner, INTERSOS conducted home visits for 12 victims of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). Two focus group discussions on identification, referral and available services for victims of SGBV were also organized. A total of 27 individuals participated. Focus group discussions enable UNHCR and its partners to better identify refugee's needs and to share with them information on services available in the camp.
- During the month of February, UNHCR in Mauritania worked on the preparation of events in Mberra camp and in Nouakchott to celebrate International Women's Women planned on March 8, 2015. This year, International Women's Women will be celebrated under the following theme: *Women empowerment - empowerment of humanity: imagine!* The programme of the event was developed in close collaboration with refugee women and partner organizations.
- On 10 February, UNHCR through its implementing partner INTERSOS supervised the election of the 40 members of the newly created community-based Child Protection Committee in Mberra camp. The committee will play an essential role in the identification of risks related to child protection and in the formulation of solutions.
- From 9 to 21 February, UNHCR hosted a Child Protection mission from UNHCR headquarters to Mberra camp. The mission aimed at providing:
 - Training to UNHCR and partners' staff (INTEROS and the Lutheran World Federation) on Best Interest Determination;
 - Training to the community-based Child Protection Committee on identification of and response to child abuse;
 - Technical support regarding the finalization of the 2015 child protection strategy; and
 - General recommendations and guidance on child protection case management.

Education

Achievements and Impact

- As of February, 3 704 children (1 706 girls and 1 998 boys) were registered in the six primary schools of the camp. UNHCR continues to pay incentives for 100 teachers in the camp (including 20 women) and 6 directors and associate directors.
- On 27 February, UNHCR's implementing partner INTERSOS organized a socio-cultural event with the involvement of pupils in each of the six primary schools. The organization of school events is part of UNHCR's efforts to promote primary school enrolment through extra-curricular activities.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- While all children in Mberra camp can access primary school, the level of enrolment remains low. One of the main reasons for this limited enrolment is the nomadic life-style of the refugees that leaves little space to formal education of children.
- The rate of school attendance also remains limited. In February, UNHCR's implementing partner, INTERSOS met with the directors of the camp's schools to discuss measures to combat absenteeism.



Achievements and Impact

- In February, 55 medical evacuations of Malian refugees from Bassikounou to secondary and tertiary structures were organized.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Despite UNHCR and partners' health interventions in the camp, some gaps remain, including the absence of a radiology department in Bassikounou and the lack of a mental health specialist in the camp for the prescription of psychiatric drugs.



Achievements and Impact

- According to the global WFP/UNHCR Memorandum of Understanding and the local tripartite agreement between WFP, UNHCR and its implementing partner, the *Commissariat à la Sécurité Alimentaire (CSA)*, WFP procures and delivers food to its extended delivery point in Bassikounou. UNHCR transports the food rations to Mberra camp, manages the stock and distributes the food rations to the refugees through the CSA on a monthly basis in the five distribution centers of the camp.
- In February, 51 432 refugees (14 796 households) received food during the monthly distribution organized by UNHCR through its implementing partner, the *Commissariat à la sécurité alimentaire*. Please see below the composition of the food basket:

	Daily ration (g)	Monthly ration (Kg)
Rice	200	6,00
Pulses	100	3,00
Oil	25	0,75
Total	325	9,75

- During the distribution, UNHCR conducted a food basket monitoring through its implementing partner, *Action contre la faim (ACF)*, to verify the quantity and quality of the distributed food items. The monitoring consists of randomly selecting a sample of beneficiaries after they have collected their food package. Food packages are weighted to ensure that all families receive the established ration of food. In February, due to the significant funding shortage faced by WFP, the food ration distributed to refugees decreased to 1 279 Kcal per person per day .
- In February, soap (four pieces per individual for two months) was distributed to all refugees in the camp.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- WFP is currently facing a funding shortage of approximately USD 4 million that has a significant impact on the quantity of food distributed to beneficiaries in 2015.

- Since the beginning of the crisis, nutrition surveys and studies, including SMART and SMART/SENS surveys, in Mberra camp have enabled UNHCR and partners to better understand and address malnutrition among the refugee population. Based on these surveys, agencies have developed strategies to combat malnutrition in the camp, leading to a substantial reduction of the Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) and Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) rates from, respectively 13,2% and 3,2% in 2012 to 9,9% and 0,5% in 2014. While these malnutrition rates are now below the alarm thresholds of 10% for GAM and 2% for SAM, UNHCR and partners need to maintain their efforts to further reduce malnutrition among refugees living in the camp.

Please find below a table summarizing the GAM and SAM decreases between 2012 and 2014.

	End of 2012	End of 2013	End of 2014
Global Acute Malnutrition rate	13,2%	11,8%	9,9%
Severe Acute Malnutrition rate	3,2%	1,4%	0,8%

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Achievements and Impact

- In Mberra 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 can access water through 702 water taps located in all sections of the camp. As a result, refugees have access to more than 30 liters of potable water per person per day.
- UNHCR, through its partner ACF, continues to treat the water with chlorine to prevent development of waterborne diseases. According to the results of water tests realized every week, the quantity of residual chlorine in water is 0.4 mg / L at water taps, 0, 2 mg/L at the household level.
- With regard to sanitation and hygiene, 2,420 semi-permanent communal latrines (22 persons/latrine) and 2,520 communal showers (21 persons/ shower) are operational in the camp. In addition, there are four areas of solid waste management (sorting, incineration and/or landfill) and 73 public wash areas are operational.
- Awareness campaigns on hygiene promotion were conducted by 15 hygiene promoters and the 43 Sanitation and Hygiene Committees composed of refugees and animators from ACF. The campaigns aimed at promoting good hygiene practices, including on proper hand-washing, water conservation and prevention of waterborne diseases. It is estimated that some 14,500 individuals were reached in total.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The construction of 300 semi durable latrines and the rehabilitation of 350 latrines are ongoing.

Self-Reliance and Peaceful coexistence

Achievements and Impact

- In February, four focus group discussions in four villages around Mberra camp were conducted by UNHCR, through its implementing partner INTERSOS, to discuss the consequences of the deactivation process. In addition, a training on conflict resolution with the community-based Peaceful Coexistence Committee was organized on February 22nd.
- UNHCR provided 83 non-refugee families (218 individuals) who were de-activated in January/February 2015 with cash assistance and non-food items to facilitate their return to host villages.
- UNHCR, through its implementing partner, ACF, continues to follow up on the 115 income-generation activities funded in 2014.



UNHCR funds income-generation activities such as this small iron forge for vulnerable refugees in Mberra camp (UNHCR/S. Laroze Barrit-January 2015)

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 UN agencies such as OCHA, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP as well as 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

No contribution has been recorded for the operation in 2015.

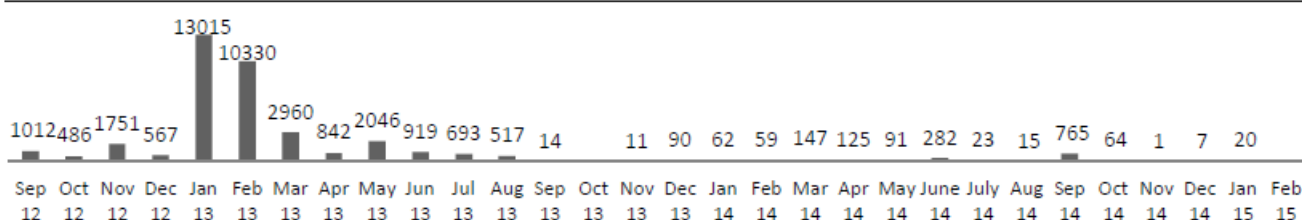
UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have contributed to this operation in previous years, as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programs with unearmarked and broadly earmarked funds.

ANNEXES






1. Population Statistics-Mberra Camp (as of 28 February 2015)

Age & Gender						
	0-4	5-11	12-17	18-59	60+	Total
Female	4,081	7,554	3,196	12,601	1,567	28,999
Male	4,149	7,340	3,209	7,535	1,170	23,403
Total	8,230	14,894	6,405	20,136	2,737	52,402
	15.71%	28.42%	12.22%	38.43%	5.22%	

Malian New Arrival



2. Infrastructures available in Mberra Camp (as of 28 February 2015)

				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 reception center 4 community centres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 health posts 1 health center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 distributions centers (food and non-food items) 1 Intensive Nutritional Recovery and Education Centre (CRENI) 4 Nutritional Rehabilitation Centres for Severe Malnutrition (CRENAS) 6 Nutritional Rehabilitation Centres for Moderate Severe Malnutrition (CRENAM) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 boreholes 699 water taps 2,420 semi-permanent communal latrines 2,520 communal showers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 schools and canteens 6 child-friendly spaces

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