

MAURITANIA

UNHCR OPERATIONAL UPDATE

As of 14 September 2015

KEY FIGURES

395

New arrivals from Mali
(since the end of April)

14,401

Malian households in Mberra camp
(as of 31 July)

5,507

Malian refugees with specific needs
(as of 1 September)

30L

Of potable water available per
person per day in Mberra camp

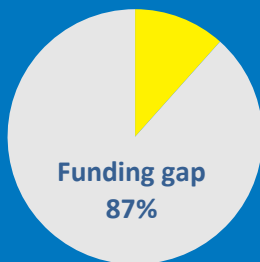
22

Persons per latrine in Mberra camp

FUNDING

USD 24.4M

Requested for the operation



PRIORITIES

- Maintain protection and assistance for all Malian refugees in Mberra camp.
- Strengthen support to refugees' self-reliance.
- Maintain peaceful coexistence between the refugee and host communities.

HIGHLIGHTS

- While Mauritania has maintained its borders open to new arrivals of asylum seekers in the country, UNHCR continues to cooperate with the Mauritanian authorities in order to strengthen protection for refugees and asylum seekers in Mauritania.

- To this end, a **protection workshop was carried out by UNHCR** on 6 August 2015 for 12 Mauritanian civil servants in charge of national registration centers.



Distribution of UNIQLO clothes to refugees in
Nouakchott
UNHCR/Helena Pes

- Between August and September, **more than 1,000 urban refugees in Nouakchott were provided with clothes** generously donated by the clothes company UNIQLO.
- In Mberra Camp, UNHCR continues to promote refugees' **self-reliance** through the financing of **80 income-generating projects** and the follow up on projects financed in previous years. In August, beneficiaries were provided with **common assets and individual kits** to enable them to carry out their activities.
- UNHCR, in cooperation with WFP and the *Commissariat à la sécurité alimentaire*, organized a general food distribution in August targeting all refugees in the camp.

Population of concern (as of 1 September 2015)

A total of **51,649** people are assisted by UNHCR in Mauritania

Malian refugees in Mberra camp

50,102

Urban refugees and asylum seekers

1,547

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 occurred, thus further stretching the limited resources available in the area.

In collaboration with the Mauritanian Government that has kept its borders open to new influxes, UN organizations and national and international NGOs, UNHCR leads the humanitarian response for **50,102 Malian refugees in Mberra camp**. In addition, the organization protects and assists **1,043 urban refugees and 504 asylum seekers**, mainly from the **Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Syria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Senegal**.

Lately, recent violence in Northern Mali sparked new waves of displacements and 395 new arrivals in Mauritania have been registered since the end of April 2015. Large-scale returns of refugees are therefore not yet envisaged and UNHCR and its partners are maintaining their presence in Bassikounou to sustain the humanitarian response at Mberra Camp.

Achievements



Protection

Achievements and Impact

- On 6 August 2015, UNHCR carried out a **protection workshop** in Nouakchott for 12 **Mauritanian civil servants** in charge of national **registration centres**. Participants received training on international protection principles as applied to refugees in Mauritania in collaboration with the Ministry of the Interior.



A refugee trying out his clothes provided by UNIQLO through UNHCR in Nouakchott
UNHCR/Helena Pes

- In August, **1,043 urban refugees** in Nouakchott were provided with clothes generously donated by the company **UNIQLO**. The distribution was carried out by UNHCR, through its partner the *Association pour la lutte contre la pauvreté et le sous développement*.
- UNHCR Mauritania together with its partner *Association pour la lutte contre la pauvreté et le sous développement* supported the electoral process for urban refugee leaders in Nouakchott. A refugee commission facilitated the **election of twelve leaders who** will represent urban refugees for two years and will support UNHCR to address community services.
- In August, UNHCR provided **training** for the staff of Intersos, a partner organization ensuring protection for refugees in Mberra camp. The training focused on **gender-based violence, organisation of support groups, security, child protection, assistance to people with specific needs and vulnerability codes**.

- In Mberra camp, UNHCR continues to prevent and respond to **gender-based violence (GBV)**. In August, 18 victims of early pregnancy and their parents attended a **support group discussion** organized by a psychologist around the topic of **early marriage**. New cases of early marriage and victims of sexual violence received psychologic and social assistance. In addition, **“questions and answers” sessions** on prevention and response to GBV were held with refugee women leaders in each block of the camp.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- At present, in Mauritania refugee identification cards are solely issued by UNHCR and not by the national authorities. In order to strengthen refugees’ protection, UNHCR continues to advocate with the Mauritanian authorities for the **establishment of a joint mechanism for issuing refugee identification documents** in order to improve freedom of movement inside the country.

Durable Solutions

Achievements and Impact

- Thanks to the joint action of UNHCR and IOM, **a family of six individuals was resettled to Denmark in August** with the assistance of the Danish Immigration Services.
- **UNHCR facilitated voluntary repatriation for three refugees to return to Bangui in Central African Republic.** The refugees received counseling before travelling, as well as a repatriation grant.

Education

Achievements and Impact

- In Mberra camp, during summer vacation, **UNHCR through its partner Intersos carried out summer courses for children and adolescents with 51 teachers.**
- In order to improve refugees’ self-reliance capacities, **317 adults**, mostly women, are currently attending **alphabetization** courses in **Songhaï, Arabic and Tamasheq** languages in the camp. This activity is part of UNHCR’s self-reliance promotion programme carried out through its partner, Intersos.



UNHCR continues to support education for all refugees in Mberra Camp.
UNHCR/Marc Fawe



Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR continues to support primary health care in the camp for all refugees, as well as secondary and tertiary care. In August, **24 medical cases in need of secondary/tertiary care** were evacuated to Nema and Nouakchott hospitals.
- The organization also provides the governmental health center in Mberra camp with **drugs and medical consumables** in order to ensure refugees' access to adequate treatment inside the camp.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- At present, psychological assistance for mentally challenged patients is carried out by UNHCR through its partner Intersos. Nevertheless, the particular condition of certain severe cases would require a special medical attention which is not yet available.



Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR and its partners continue to fight malnutrition in Mberra camp, particularly among children as well as pregnant and breast feeding mothers. At present, the global malnutrition indicator, which is still below the 10% threshold, is further improving with malnutrition almost exclusively concerning most recent arrivals. All cases have been promptly identified and addressed by UNHCR and its partners within the **Intensive Nutritional Rehabilitation Centre (CRENI)** and **Nutritional Rehabilitation Centers for Severe Malnutrition (CRENAS)**.
- In Mberra camp, all refugees received food (rice, pulses and oil)** during the August general food distribution organized by UNHCR through its partner, the *Commissariat à la sécurité alimentaire* and in partnership with WFP. The distribution was accompanied with a **Food Basket Monitoring** conducted by UNHCR through its implementing partner, *Action contre la faim*, to verify the quantity and quality of the distributed food items.



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**. In July, a total of 1,143 m3 of water was available per day. Refugees have access to potable water through **593 water taps** located in all sections of the camp: 80% of water is consumed for domestic purposes, while 20% is used for gardening, livestock and other self-reliance purposes. UNHCR, through its partner *Action contre la Faim*, continues to treat the water with chlorine to prevent the development of waterborne diseases.
- With regard to sanitation and hygiene, **2,342 semi-permanent communal latrines** (22 persons/latrine) and **2,666 communal showers** (22 persons/shower) are operational in the camp. In addition, there are four areas of solid waste management (sorting, incineration and/or landfill) and **82 public wash areas**.



Raising awareness is the key to prevent waterborne diseases in Mberra Camp. UNHCR/Helena Pes

- In order to raise awareness on key water and sanitation issues, a **door-to-door awareness-raising campaign on hygiene promotion reaching more than 2,000 individuals**, took place in Mberra camp during August. **In addition, more than 10,000 people were reached by awareness-raising sessions** on different hygiene topics such as “**hand washing**”, “**waterborne diseases transmission**”, “**personal and food preparation hygiene**” and “**the water cycle**”.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Due to the harsh climate conditions during the rainy season in Mberra camp, many toilets have been damaged and need to be rehabilitated.



Shelter and Non Food Items

Achievements and Impact

- In August, UNHCR distributed **6,807 mosquito nets** in order to replace deteriorated nets that were distributed in previous years.



Access to Energy

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR continues to provide gas for **200 families** and charcoal for more than **1,500 families with specific needs**, through its partner SOS Desert.



Maintaining peaceful coexistence

Achievements and Impact

- In order to promote peaceful coexistence in Mberra camp, a **Sports Day involving 500 children** among the **refugees and the host community** was organized by UNHCR and Intersos in August. In addition, **2 campaigns** took place in the neighbouring villages of Mouterawagh and Mbere Toume (in the Bassikounou Region) in order **to raise awareness on the role of women in preventing conflicts**. A total of **455 people** were **reached and sensitized** during the event.



Self-Reliance

Achievements and Impact

- In Mberra camp, UNHCR places particular attention on strengthening refugees' **self-reliance**. The organization currently follows up on more than **150 income-generating projects**, which were funded in 2013 and 2014, including sewing activities, butcheries and small shops. In addition, **80 new projects for 2015** are currently ongoing. In the month of August, almost half of the income-generating new projects beneficiaries have already experienced a particularly significant growth in their income following the **distribution of 60 common assets and 20 individual kits**. New business activities flourish thanks to the new assets, such as **utensils for restaurants and bakery, machines for leather tanning and sewing, tools for metalworking and jewellery, photography equipment** among many others.
- UNHCR, through SOS Desert, provides **1,872 women with access to gardening areas** representing some five hectares of arable land in the camp. Gardening activities play an important role in enriching refugees' diet and provide them with an income resulting from the sale of vegetables and fruit.



Jewellery making in Mberra Camp.
©Vincenzo Cardile

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps.

- At present, the demand for access to income generating project activities exceeds the actual availability of funds. Considering the importance of such activities in order to improve refugees' self-reliance in the camp, **additional funding help reduce refugees' dependency on external food aid**.

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 for the operation amount to **US\$ 3.2 million** received from the **Government of Japan**. In addition, UNHCR recently received an in-kind contribution of clothes from the company **UNIQLO**.

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.

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