

## KEY FIGURES

**1,843**

Voluntary returns to Mali facilitated since January 2016

**80**

New arrivals from Mali in 2016

**4,408**

Malian refugees with specific needs (as of 1 July 2016)

**11,376**

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

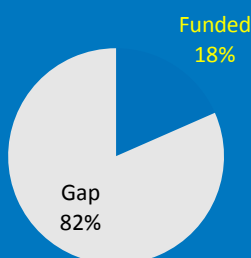
**30L**

of potable water available per person per day

## FUNDING 2016

**USD 19M**

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.

## MAURITANIA

### UNHCR OPERATIONAL UPDATE

As of 14 July 2016

## HIGHLIGHTS



Mali, Mauritania and UNHCR sign a Tripartite Agreement for the safe repatriation of thousands of Malian refugees. UNHCR/S.Laroze 2016

- On 16 June, Mali, Mauritania and UNHCR signed a **tripartite agreement** for the voluntary repatriation of Malian refugees living in Mauritania. According to UNHCR's Country Representative, Mohamed Alwash, "The Tripartite Agreement is the result of a common desire to create a space for discussion, reflection and decisions to guarantee the right of return of Malian refugees in the best conditions"
- On 20 June, thousands of refugees in Nouakchott and Mbera camp gathered to celebrate **World Refugee Day** with the recital of poems, music, dances, art crafts exhibitions and a football match.
- For the first time in Mbera camp, a **cash component** was introduced to the monthly food distribution. All refugees received oil, rice and pulses in June along with some cash, providing them with more autonomy.

### Population of concern (as of 1 July 2016)

A total of **43,082** people are assisted by UNHCR in Mauritania

**Malian refugees in Mbera camp**

41,255

**Urban refugees and asylum seekers**

1,827

# 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 **41,255 Malian refugees in Mbera camp**. In addition, the organization protects and assists **1,398 urban refugees and 429 asylum seekers**, mainly from the **Central African Republic, Syria and Côte d'Ivoire**.

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. Some 80 new arrivals from Mali have been registered in 2016. 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.

## Achievements



Protection

### Achievements and Impact

- On June 16, the Minister of Solidarity, Humanitarian Action and the Reconstruction of the North of the Republic of Mali, Mr. Hamadou Konate, the Minister of Interior and Decentralization of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, Ould Ahmedou Abdallah, and the Office of the Representative to UNHCR in Mauritania, Mohamed Alwash signed a **Tripartite Agreement between the Governments of Mali and Mauritania and UNHCR**. The Tripartite Agreement aims at ensuring **best conditions for voluntary return while strengthening asylum environment for refugees** who are willing to stay in Mauritania. Following this Agreement, a Tripartite Commission and a Technical Working Group should be established.
- In Mbera camp, 16 June was marked by a **sensitization** activity in commemoration of the **International Day of the African Child**, involving thousands of refugees and Mauritians as well as the local authorities under the common theme "Conflict and Crises in Africa: the child's right to Protection". A practical step forward was made for many children at risk in the camp with the outreach and sensitization of 32 families who have chosen to welcome orphans. 10 new children at risk have been identified and received social assistance.



The Minister of Interior and Decentralization of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, Ould Ahmedou Abdallah signs the Tripartite Agreement to ensure the best return and asylum conditions for Malian refugees. UNHCR/S.Laroze 2016

- On 20 June, **World Refugee Day** was celebrated involving thousands of refugees both in urban areas and Mbera refugee camp. Celebrations this year were marked by music, dancing, poems, art crafts exhibitions and a football match. This is was the second round of celebrations following a main WRD event which took place in Nouakchott on 31 May with a massive public concert and a series of “exile” inspired art exhibitions.
- On 29 June, UNHCR in partnership with the *Association pour la Lutte contre la pauvreté et le sous-Developpement* (ALPD) and Medicos del Mundo NGOs organized an **informative session** about **female genital mutilation** for urban refugee women in Nouakchott.
- 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. In June, **59 victims of sexual and gender-based violence** were followed up with home visits. Among them, 4 cases in need of medical attention were referred and one girl who had been forced to drop out school has been re-enrolled to continue studying. 2 informative-video sessions about the prevention of GBV took place this month involving 30 community representatives in Mbera camp.
- 657 people with specific needs**, particularly people living with physical disability and elderly, **received tailored assistance** in terms of food and cash in June.

## Durable Solutions

### Achievements and Impact

- Since December 2015, increased interest for voluntary repatriation among Malian refugees has been observed. In June, UNHCR and its partner the World Lutheran Foundation facilitated **voluntary return** for **418 Malians**, some of whom have lived in Mbera camp since 2012. Most of the families come from the region of Timbuktu in northern Mali. Returnees received a repatriation cash assistance for transportation. UNHCR representations in Mauritania and Mali work together and a **Tripartite Agreement** between Mali, Mauritania and UNHCR was signed to ensure the best return conditions and the reintegration of returnees in their country of origin.
- In June, UNHCR facilitated the **reinstallation** to France for a **woman at risk** and **voluntary repatriation** to Abidjan for **three Ivorian refugees** who found refuge in Mauritania following the 2011 crisis. Unlike the prevailing trend in the region, requests for voluntary return assistance from this community have been very few in Mauritania.

## Education

### Achievements and Impact

- For the first time this year since the set-up of Mbera refugee camp, **103 students** had access to the **Diplôme d’Etudes Fondamentales (DEF) examinations** in compliance with the Malian curriculum. While another **175 candidates attended BAC examination sessions** in June. Refugees’ access to these national examinations is essential to allow them to repatriate, when possible, in the best conditions in Mali.



DEF exams sessions are held for the first time in Mbera camp.  
UNHCR/H.S. Yakara 2016

- **Final exams** were also held for about 5,000 students of the **6 primary schools** in Mbera camp before the start of summer breaks. Following increased sensitisation activities to promote “Education for All” school attendance in the camp has raised up from 50% in mid-2015 to 68% at present.
- More than **500 adults continue** to attend **literacy and numeracy courses** in Tamashek, Arabic, Songhai and Pular languages at the **14 adult education centres** of the camp.



## Health

### Achievements and Impact

- 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. In June, **19 patients** were referred to Nema and Nouakchott hospitals.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Health facilities in the camp lack screening equipment for diagnostic such as x-ray, ultrasound and hospital beds. The provision of such equipment would considerably improve the referral system by reducing the number of cases in need of medical evacuation for secondary and tertiary health care.



## Food Security and Nutrition

### Achievements and Impact

- During the **monthly general food distribution** in Mbera camp, all refugees received a food ration composed of cereals, salt, oil, and pulses as well as a nutritional supplement of CSB ++ to better cope with the seasonal heat and the fasting period of the Ramadan which ended on 6 July. For the first time in Mbera camp, a cash component was introduced to the monthly food distribution. All refugees received oil, rice and pulses in June along with some cash. The distribution was organized by UNHCR through its partner *Commissariat à la Sécurité Alimentaire* and in collaboration with WFP who procured and transported the food rations and distributed the cash.



Children in Mbera camp drink goat milk for breakfast.  
UNHCR/H.Pes 2016

- To strengthen sustainable livelihood for refugees, in June UNHCR ensured distribution of goats for **193 people with specific needs** through its partner SOS Desert.

## Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

### Achievements and Impact

- In June, works started for the construction and rehabilitation of more than a thousand toilets in the camp. **55 new toilets were constructed**. Another **2,214 existing toilets** have been disinfected during a **cleaning outreach** which was carried out by dedicated community committees.
- To improve sanitation in Mbera camp, UNHCR carries out a **solid waste management programme** through its partner SOS Desert. Within this programme, solid waste is separated from organic waste. Manure from livestock activities is regularly collected and 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).
- In June, more than 11,000 people were reached through hygiene sensitizations campaigns which were carried out by UNHCR's partner Action contre la faim Espagne, through mass film projections and theatre in different areas of the camp. In addition, 130 hand washing, 59 sanitation and 161 cleaning sensitisation sessions were carried out by the community committee.

## Shelter and Non Food Items

### Achievements and Impact

- Semi-permanent shelters distributed in 2013, which have a two-year-lifespan need to be replaced. In June, UNHCR identified and **reached almost 3,000 households** who were given priority in preparation of the coming July shelter distribution **to replace deteriorated shelters**. Identified households received a distribution voucher.

### 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 other 5,000 shelters will need to be replaced in 2016.

## Self-Reliance

### Achievements and Impact

- Strengthening refugees' self-reliance in Mbera camp continues to be a priority for UNHCR to gradually reduce their dependency on humanitarian assistance. While **a hundred new projects** are under selection, the Agency continues to follow up on **195** income-generation activities funded in 2014-2015 through **Action contre la Faim-Espagne (ACF-E)**. In June, 151 beneficiaries were trained on management tools in order to facilitate the process of transferring assets in preparation of an eventual return to Mali. In total, some 3,000 people (including direct beneficiaries and their family) benefited from these income-generations schemes since 2013.



Woman treats goat skin to prepare it for crafts artwork as part of a UNHCR-funded family income-generating project activity. UNHCR/H.Pes 2016

 Peaceful coexistence

### Achievements and Impact

- To strengthen peaceful coexistence between refugees and the host community in the Bassikounou region, UNHCR with its partner SOS Desert currently carry out five projects aimed at improving life-conditions in the villages of Seremassa, Seredouba, Lemghays, Sedra and Bir el Barka, located in the surroundings of the camp. In June, **514 improved woodstoves and 135 ploughs** were **distributed to the populations** of four villages in the Bassikounou area. **Rehabilitation of a local well** was completed in the border area of Fassala. In addition, a **capacity building outreach** in the field of income-generating activities assets management was carried out by experts from the Lutheran World Federation for the benefit of the local youth committees in the areas of Bassikounou, Mberra, Fassala, Sissakou and Koussama.

### 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\$ 15.5 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.

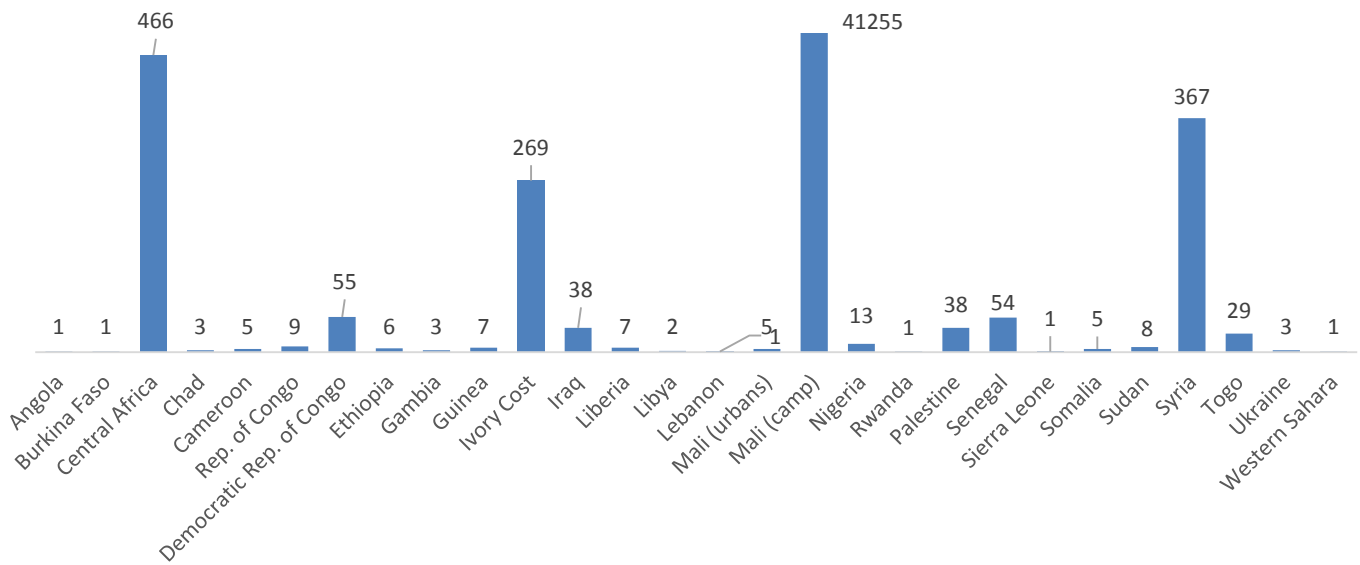
#### Major donors of unrestricted and regional funds to UNHCR in 2016 (in USD):

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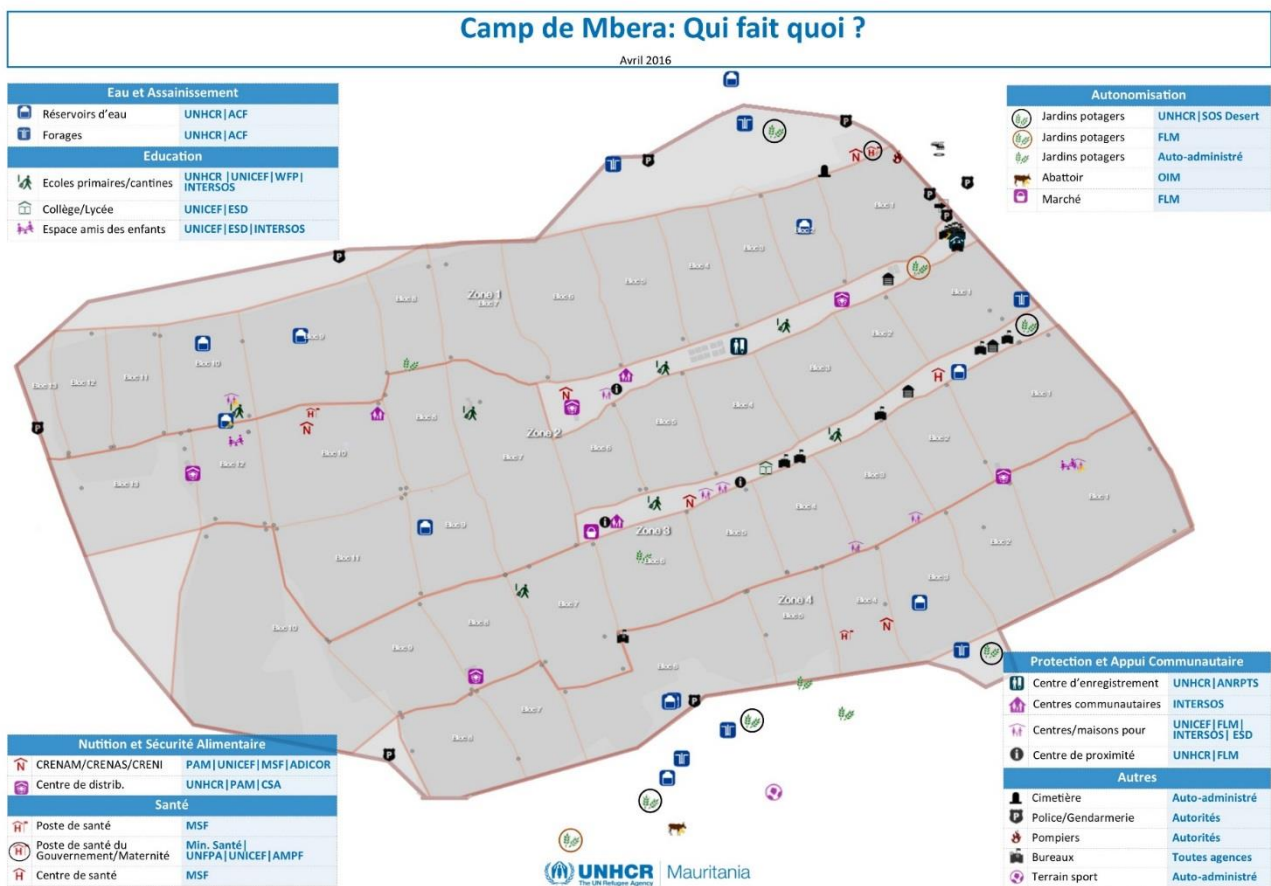
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## Annex 1 – Breakdown of the refugee population in Mauritania per origin



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



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### Links:

