

MAURITANIA

UNHCR OPERATIONAL UPDATE

As of 16 November 2015

KEY FIGURES

486

New arrivals from Mali
(in 2015)

14,258

Malian households in Mberra camp
(as of 1 November)

5,454

Malian refugees with specific needs
(as of 1 November)

30L

Of potable water available per
person per day in Mberra camp

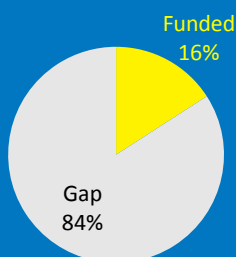
22

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 refugees and host communities.

HIGHLIGHTS

- In November, United Nations agencies in Mauritania and the Mauritanian authorities joined together to celebrate the **70th anniversary of the United Nations**. Several events were organized in Nouakchott and in other cities, including Bassikounou.



Syrian family in Nouakchott
UNHCR/H.Pes

- While UNHCR continues to **protect and assist urban refugees and asylum seekers** located in Nouakchott and Nouadhibou, an increase in the number of arrivals of **Syrian asylum seekers** has been observed since the beginning of 2015. As of 1st November, the number of Syrian refugees and asylum seekers protected by UNHCR in Mauritania stood at 309 individuals.
- On 22 October, the Executive Director of the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), Ertharin Cousin paid a visit to Mberra Camp. While stressing the **progresses in improving living conditions for Malian refugees** since 2012, WFP Chief warned that fund shortages could have a disastrous impact on food security in the camp.
- In October, **UNHCR in Mauritania** organized an internal retreat to review its **2016 plan**. Given the permanence of insecurity in Northern Mali, UNHCR will reinforce its commitment to **maintain protection and assistance for all Malian refugees** with a particular attention for **people with specific needs**. **Education, self-reliance** and **peaceful coexistence** are also identified as key areas of intervention for 2016 in Mberra camp and in urban areas.
- On 6 October, the Lutheran World Federation (FLM) inaugurated a new **market place** in Mberra camp. The new 300m² area will provide refugees with a place of exchange with the local communities and will play a key role in strengthening refugees' self-reliance and promoting peaceful coexistence.

Population of concern (as of 1 November 2015)

A total of **51,787** people are assisted by UNHCR in Mauritania

Malian refugees in Mberra camp

50,131

Urban refugees and asylum seekers

1,656

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 **50,131 Malian refugees in Mberra camp**. In addition, the organization protects and assists **1095 urban refugees and 561 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 486 new arrivals in Mauritania have been registered in 2015, despite the stipulation of a peace agreement in June. 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

- In October, **257 individual cases** were addressed at the **new UNHCR Protection and Community Services Office** which recently opened in **Mberra Camp**. Cases mostly consist of **family reunions, assistance, new-born registration and protection**.
- UNHCR through its partner Intersos continues to fight sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and early marriages in Mberra camp. In October, **42 victims of SGBV** received **psychosocial assistance**. A case of early marriage for a 10 year-old-girl was timely assessed and successfully prevented.
- Through its partner Intersos, UNHCR continues to provide **special assistance to more than 5,000 people with specific needs** in the camp through home visits and special assistance during food distribution.
- As part of the training activities aimed at **strengthening urban refugees' self-reliance**, UNHCR and its partner *Association pour la Lutte contre la Pauvreté et le Sous-développement (ALPD)* offer **driving course** for **19 refugees** living in Nouakchott. It is foreseen that driving licenses will increase work opportunities for refugees.



Refugees in Nouakchott and Nouadhibou have access to vocational training provided by UNHCR
UNHCR/M.Masrabeye

- UNHCR continues to guarantee overall **access to health care for urban refugees and asylum seekers**. At present, UNHCR fully covers primary health care costs for **people with specific needs** as well as **secondary health care costs for all refugees in Nouakchott**. In the northern city of **Nouadhibou**, UNHCR recently finalized a **collaboration protocol** with both public and municipal health care institutions **for the integration of urban refugees into the national health system**.

Education

Achievements and Impact

- In Mberra Camp, **more than a hundred teachers** have **resumed** their activities following the **start of the Mauritanian 2015-2016 school year** in October. School enrolment is still on-going for the **6 primary schools** in the camp.
- In Mberra Camp, the number of **adults** attending **alphabetization** courses in **Songhaï, Arabic** and **Tamasheq** languages increased **from 317 in August, to 352 in October**. This activity is part of UNHCR's self-reliance promotion programme carried out by its partner Intersos.



A 6-year-old girl starts school in Mberra Camp.
UNHCR/Helena Pes

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Education remains a challenging sector in the camp. As a response to the **low school attendance** indicators, UNHCR has strengthened its efforts in mobilizing families to send their children to school. In October, 1,500 families were reached through sensitization activities.
- The demand for **alphabetization classes** remains high despite the lack of fund. Additional resources would help increase the number of beneficiaries in 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 Mberra surroundings. In October, **23 patients** were **referred to Nema and Nouakchott** hospitals.
- Between **23 and 26 October**, in alignment with the national health strategy, campaigns for **polio vaccination, vitamin A uptake, deworming and hand washing** were carried out in Mberra for the benefit of both the refugees and the host communities. **More than 22,600 children** aged from 0 to 5 were reached by the campaigns.

Food Security and Nutrition

Achievements and Impact

- During the **October and the November general food distributions** in Mberra camp, all Refugees received a food ration (rice, salt and oil) of more than 1,700 Kcal per day, organized by UNHCR through its partner *Commissariat à la Sécurité Alimentaire* and in collaboration with WFP. The distributions were 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.
- Each month, **43 auxiliaries** from the refugee community (one per Block) carry out **awareness-raising activities** through a door-to-door campaign, delivering key messages and information prior the general food distribution.

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 have access to potable water through **590 water taps** located in all sections of the camp. It is estimated that 80% of water is consumed for domestic purposes, while 20% is used for gardening, livestock and other self-reliance purposes.
- Tests carried out in the month of October confirmed that **chlorine** concentration level in the water is **compliant** with UNHCR, WHO and Sphere standards.
- UNHCR ensures water system maintenance on a regular basis: in October, 39 water taps were replaced and 10 repaired, 6 plumbing interventions were done to prevent leakages. A **new device for chlorine distribution** into the system was installed in 3 water boreholes at the pipelines level. **The innovation will optimize water system** functioning and maintenance.
- With regard to sanitation, **2,342 semi-permanent communal latrines** (22 persons/latrine) and **2,666 communal showers** (22 persons/ shower) are operational in the camp. After **completion of 10 new public wash areas** in October, **92** are now available in the camp.
- In order to improve sanitation in Mberra camp, UNHCR carries out a **solid waste management programme** through its partner SOS Desert. Within this programme, **600 dustbins** have been distributed in the camp. In addition, there are four areas of solid waste management (sorting, incineration and/or landfill).
- On 26 October, on the occasion of [the Global Hand-Washing Day](#), a public campaign was carried out in Mberra camp involving pupils from the 6 primary schools who were sensitized on the importance of hand washing to prevent diseases.



A sketch on the occasion of Global Hand Washing Day in Mberra Camp. [UNHCR/M.Diallo](#)

- In order to promote awareness on water use in Mberra camp, **44 refugee representatives** received a **3-day training** about **WASH** indicators at a household level. The trained representatives will be responsible for a water use follow-up at among their communities.
- To promote hygiene in the camp, **2,873 people** were **reached through** door-to-door campaigns, Focus Group Discussions, public campaigns, community meetings and informative chats.

Shelter and Non Food Items

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR continues to ensure **shelter for all refugees** with a special attention to people with specific needs. **58 shelter kits** were distributed in October to replace shelters deteriorated by the arid climatic conditions in the area.

Access to Energy

Achievements and Impact

- As part of an energy pilot project, UNHCR continues to provide gas for **200 families with specific needs** through its partner SOS Desert. In addition, UNHCR provides charcoal to some 1,500 families.

Self-Reliance

Achievements and Impact

- In Mberra camp, UNHCR places particular attention on strengthening refugees' **self-reliance**. More than **100 income-generating activities**, which started in 2014 have now turned into flourishing small businesses, including **sewing activities, butcheries and small shops**. In addition, **78 new small businesses** such as **restaurants, shops, artisanal crafts making and photography** were started in 2015 and are currently ongoing.
- In October, **180** beneficiaries of income-generating activities were **trained on proper assets maintenance**.
- UNHCR, through SOS Desert, continues to empower **1,872 women with access to gardening areas** now representing some **eight hectares** of arable land in the camp as well as **10 community milk-units** and **500 goat herders** who benefited from UNHCR self-reliance strengthening programme. Gardening and other local food production activities play an important role in enriching refugees' diet and provide them with an income resulting from the sale of vegetables, fruit and other products.
- **15 humanitarian workers** from UNHCR self-reliance partner SOS Desert were **trained** on agricultural techniques to improve **soil sustainable management and use** in order to **build capacity for community gardening groups** in the camp.



Gardening products in Mberra Camp. UNHCR/S.Laroze

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps.

- **Adult illiteracy** in Mberra camp still represents a main challenge for the management of income-generating activities projects. For this reason in October, 124 beneficiaries were sensitized on the importance of attending alphabetization classes.

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.

In November, UN organizations in Mauritania, partner agencies and the authorities celebrated the **70th anniversary of the United Nations**. Events were organized in Nouakchott and in several other cities in Mauritania, including in Bassikounou where concerts, exhibition of traditional products and parades took place in the presence of hundreds of Mauritians living in the Bassikounou areas and refugees living in Mberra camp.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Total recorded contributions for the operation amount to **US\$ 4.6 million** received from the **Governments of Belgium and Japan**. In addition, this year UNHCR in Mauritania received in-kind contribution of clothes from the company **UNIQLO** and dates from the **United Arab Emirates**.

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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