

## MAURITANIA

### UNHCR OPERATIONAL UPDATE

As of 13 July 2015

#### KEY FIGURES

**395**

New arrivals from Mali (since the end of April)

**14,224**

Malian households in Mberra camp (as of 1 July)

**5,471**

Malian refugees with specific needs (as of 1 July)

**30L**

Of potable water available per person per day in Mberra camp

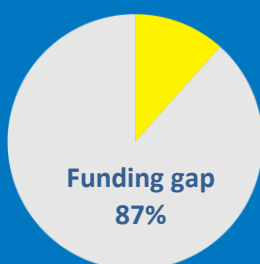
**22**

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.
- Reinforce peaceful coexistence between the refugee and host communities.

#### HIGHLIGHTS

- Following recent episodes of violence sparking in Northern Mali, a **new inflow of 395 Malian refugees** was registered in Mauritania since the end of April. The refugees were transferred to Mberra camp and received adequate assistance from UNHCR and its partners.



Celebrations of World Refugee Day in Mberra Camp  
UNHCR/I. Bocoum

- On **20 and 22 June**, more than **3,000 people** came together in Nouakchott, Nouadhibou and Mberra camp to celebrate the strength and resilience of refugees on the occasion of the **World Refugee Day**. Traditional music and dances, camel and horse parades, poems, a fashion show and exhibitions as well as football matches between the refugees and the host community were organized.
- On **16 June**, UNHCR and its partners UNICEF and INTERSOS celebrated the **Day of the African Child in Mberra camp**. Music entertainment, skits and poems were aimed at sensitizing the refugee community on child rights.
- Between 17 and 20 June 2015, **111 candidates** from Mberra Camp sat for the **2015 Malian Bacca-laureate session** jointly facilitated by UNHCR, UNICEF, *Ensemble pour la solidarité et le développement*, INTERSOS and the Mauritanian and Malian Ministries of Education.

#### Population of concern (as of 1 July 2015)

A total of **51,400** people are assisted by UNHCR in Mauritania (as of 1 July)

**Malian refugees in Mberra camp**

49,888

**Urban refugees and asylum seekers**

1,512

## 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, UN organizations and national and international NGOs, UNHCR leads the humanitarian response for 49,888 Malian refugees in Mberra camp. In addition, the organization protects and assists 996 urban refugees and 516 asylum seekers, mainly from Côte d'Ivoire, the Central African Republic, 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. 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

- The **World Refugee Day** was celebrated in Nouakchott, Nouadhibou and Mberra camp. The events were grouped under the 2015 global theme “With courage, let us all combine” and were aimed at celebrating refugees’ strength and resilience. Celebrations in Nouakchott and in Nouadhibou were characterized by music entertainment and the recital of poems by refugees. In Nouakchott, refugees showcased products realized with UNHCR’s support programme to income-generating activities. In Mberra camp, traditional music and dances, camel and horse parades, a fashion show and exhibitions were held involving refugees. In total, more than 3,000 people attended the events.
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- Exhibition at the World Refugee Day in Nouakchott  
UNHCR/Helena Pes
- On 16 June, on the occasion of the **Day of the African Child**, UNHCR and its partners UNICEF and INTERSOS organized an awareness raising event in Mberra camp with music entertainment, skits and poems, involving hundreds of people. The celebration was the occasion to sensitize the community on child rights.
  - UNHCR, together with UNICEF, UNFPA and OHCHR, are currently working with the Mauritanian Ministry of Justice on the **drafting of the Mauritania’s Child Protection Code**. The text reflects Mauritania’s commitment to the protection of children’s rights and the implementation of various recommendations regarding protection mechanisms for children and human rights.
  - UNHCR continues to **support urban refugees and asylum seekers’ self-reliance** through a partnership established with a local microcredit institution. While 13 people are currently benefiting from grants to develop their own

businesses activities, UNHCR plans to extend the project in order to increase the number of beneficiaries in Nouakchott and Nouadhibou.

- UNHCR continues to provide tailored **assistance for more than five thousand people with specific needs in Mberra camp**, including women and children at risk, single parents and unaccompanied or separated children as well as elderly people at risk. The organization, through its partner INTERSOS, carried out **303 home visits** in June and provided **material support to 86 people with specific needs**.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- After the **verification exercise** of the camp's population between December 2014 and May 2015, some 10,000 cases for which the nationality could not be confirmed, were referred to the *Agence nationale du registre des populations et des titres sécurisés* for further verification. Individuals confirmed to be Mauritanian nationals are de-activated from UNHCR's database. The review of these cases is still ongoing and should be finalized by the end of September.

## Durable Solutions

### Achievements and Impact

- In June, UNHCR facilitated **voluntary repatriation for 15 urban refugees**, including five who returned to Côte d'Ivoire and 10 to the Central African Republic. The refugees received assistance to travel to their home country as well as a repatriation grant.

## Education

### Achievements and Impact

- At present, 3,716 children (1,699 girls and 2,017 boys) are enrolled in the **six primary schools** in Mberra camp. UNHCR continues to support education for all in the camp through incentives for school staff, including 100 teachers, 6 directors and 6 associate directors.
- Thanks to UNHCR, UNICEF, *Ensemble pour la solidarité et le développement*, INTERSOS and the Mauritanian and Malian Ministries of Education, between 17 and 20 June 2015, 111 candidates from Mberra Camp sat for the **2015 Malian Baccalaureate session**. The official opening of the session took place in the camp in the presence of the *Hakem* (District Officer) as well as UNHCR Head of Office in Bassikounou and its partners.
- On 30 June 2015, on the occasion of the 2014/2015 school year closure, a **ceremony** took place in Mberra camp in the presence of UNHCR and its partners as well as school directors, teachers and a refugee committee. For each grade, the three best performing pupils were awarded prizes in order to encourage students' commitment.



Baccalaureate exam session in Bassikounou.  
UNHCR/Sebastien Laroze

## Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Access to education for all children in the camp remains a challenge. UNHCR and its partners continue to sensitize the refugee community on the importance of education, in close collaboration with teachers and school directors and involving children and their parents.



## Health

### Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR continues to support primary health care in the camp. In June, **26 medical cases in need of secondary/tertiary care** were evacuated to Nema and Nouakchott hospitals.
- In June, UNHCR provided the governmental health center in Mberra camp with **drugs and medical consumables** in order to ensure refugees' access to adequate treatment inside the camp, including tests for malaria and HIV/AIDS.
- Awareness raising** activities were also carried out in order to **sensitize pregnant women about safe motherhood** in the camp in order to prevent home births.



## Food Security and Nutrition

### Achievements and Impact

- In Mberra camp, **all refugees received food (rice, pulses and oil)** during the June food distribution for June organized by UNHCR through its partner, the *Commissariat à la sécurité alimentaire*. 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.
- Prior to the distribution, 43 auxiliaries from the refugee community (one per Block) carried out awareness-raising activities through a **door-to-door campaign, delivering key messages and information on the June food distribution**.
- In Mberra camp, **refugees' daily diet is enriched through refugees' access to gardening and livestock activities** provided by UNHCR. In order to improve nutrition levels for children and people with specific needs, the organization distributed **347 dairy goats** in 2015.



June food distribution in Mberra Camp.  
UNHCR/Sebastien Laroze

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps.

- WFP which provides the food for the monthly food distribution is currently facing financial difficulties which may affect food distribution in the coming months. For this reason, additional funding for food provision and nutrition activities is urgently needed in Mberra camp.

## 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 **602 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, **2,366 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 **73 public wash areas**.
- In June, **2,861 awareness raising sessions** were held to **improve sanitation and prevent waterborne and hygiene related diseases**. These included home visits, community meetings, Focus Group Discussions and meetings related to the maintenance of water points. In addition, 43 auxiliaries (one per Block) from the refugee community carried out a door-to-door campaign, delivering key messages on hygiene.



Water point in Mberra Camp.  
UNHCR/I. Bocoum

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps.

- Due to the harsh climatic conditions, maintenance and rehabilitation of existing latrines and showers in the camp is one of UNHCR's sanitation priorities.

## Access to Energy

### Achievements and Impact

- In 2015, UNHCR is implementing a **gas distribution pilot project**, through its partner SOS Desert, benefiting 200 people with specific needs. In addition, the organization provides charcoal to more than 1,500 families with specific needs.

## Self-Reliance and Peaceful coexistence

### 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 underway. **Training** activities on the following themes “Management”, “Marketing concept”, “Hygiene”, “Botany” and “Poultry Farming” have already started for the beneficiaries.
- UNHCR, through SOS Desert, continues to provide **more than 1,800 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 provides them with an income resulting from the sale of vegetables and fruit.

## Peaceful coexistence

### Achievements and Impact

- As part of the celebrations for World Refugee Day 2015, **football matches involving refugees and Mauritanian nationals** were held both in Nouakchott and Mberra camp in order **to strengthen peaceful coexistence among the refugee and host communities.**



Football match between urban refugees and Mauritanian nationals in Nouakchott  
UNHCR/Helena Pes

## 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**.

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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