



MAURITANIA

UNHCR OPERATIONAL UPDATE

As of 17 October 2015

HIGHLIGHTS

KEY FIGURES

395

New arrivals from Mali (since the end of April)

14,464

Malian households in Mberra camp (as of 1 October)

5,515

Malian refugees with specific needs (as of 1 October)

30L

Of potable water available per person per day in Mberra camp

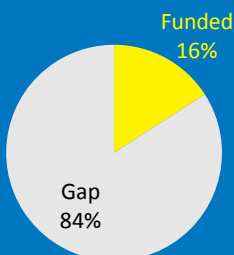
22

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.

- 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.
- In October, the **Government of Belgium** generously contributed **EUR 1.25 million** to UNHCR's operation in Mauritania, thus allowing the organization to strengthen its health and food security assistance.
- A **Joint Assessment Mission (JAM)** was conducted by UNHCR and WFP in Mberra camp between August and September. This evaluation will help assess the current response to food insecurity in the camp and the livelihood situation of refugees. The conclusions of the assessment are being finalized.
- On 15 September, a new **Protection and Community Services Office** was inaugurated by UNHCR in Mberra camp. This new structure will help improve the monitoring of and following up on protection cases, including individuals with specific needs.
- UNHCR, in cooperation with WFP and the *Commissariat à la sécurité alimentaire*, organized a **general food distribution** in September targeting all refugees in the camp with a particular emphasis on people with specific needs.
- In addition to its action in Mberra camp, UNHCR continues to protect and assist **urban refugees and asylum seekers** located in Nouakchott and Nouadhibou with a focus on strengthening their self-reliance through access to micro credits and vocational training.

Population of concern (as of 1 October 2015)

A total of **51,881** people are assisted by UNHCR in Mauritania

Malian refugees in Mberra camp

50,266

Urban refugees and asylum seekers

1,615

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 **50,266 Malian refugees in Mberra camp**. In addition, the organization protects and assists **1075 urban refugees and 540 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 1 October, following the **election of twelve urban refugees' community leaders**, UNHCR Mauritania together with its partner *Association pour la lutte contre la pauvreté et le sous développement* (ALPD) organized an awarding ceremony involving more than 80 urban refugees in Nouakchott. The elected committee will play a key role in helping to identify needs for urban refugees and asylum seekers and develop adequate responses for the next two years.
- In order to guarantee overall **access to health care** for urban refugees and asylum seekers in Mauritania, UNHCR continues to collaborate with the Mauritanian public health institutions for the integration of urban refugees into the national health system. The organization currently covers primary health care costs for refugees with specific needs and secondary health costs for all refugees.
- A new **Protection and Community Services Office** was **inaugurated in Mberra camp on 15 September** by UNHCR. Since its opening on 15 September, more than 30 individual cases in need of counselling and protection have already been addressed.



Urban Refugees meet at the Refugee Women Center in Nouakchott
UNHCR/Helena Pes

- As part of its **gender-based violence prevention programme**, UNHCR held a **group discussion** together with **43 women leaders in Mberra Camp**. The discussion focused on the promotion of woman self-reliance. In addition, a **sensitization** event on early marriages took place in September involving young girls aged from 12 to 17 as well elderly women.

Education

Achievements and Impact

- An **evaluation workshop** was carried out on 14 September in order to analyse gaps and identify strategies to boost education in Mberra Camp. **More than a hundred** participants including teachers, community leaders and humanitarian actors took part in the event and identified priorities for school year 2015-2016.
- To promote education**, a sport event was organised in Mberra camp in September, involving **500 children**. The event aimed at **encouraging child school attendance** in the primary and secondary schools in the camp.
- More than **300 adults**, mostly women, continue to attend **alphabetization** courses in **Songhaï, Arabic and Tamasheq** languages in the camp. This activity is part of UNHCR's self-reliance promotion programme carried out by its partner Intersos.



A classroom in Mberra Camp.
UNHCR/Marc Fawe

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Education remains a challenging sector in the camp. In addition to the difficulties to mobilize children and parents for primary and secondary education, limited access to scholarships may undermine graduates' efforts to continue studying at a tertiary level.

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 living around Mberra camp. In September **17 patients** were **referred** to Nema and Nouakchott hospitals.

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 that require special expertise which is not yet available in the medical facilities in the camp.

Food Security and Nutrition

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 September 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.



General Food Distribution in Mberra Camp.
UNHCR/Helena Pes

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: 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**. Toilets are regularly disinfected in order to ensure proper hygiene conditions in the camp.
- Awareness raising and sensitization activities** are key for the prevention of waterborne diseases in the camp: **1,892 door-to-door visits**, **14 focus groups discussion**, **117 community meetings** and **56 hygiene education sessions for children** were carried out in September, reaching **13,922 people**. Sensitization focused on **hand washing practices**, **house waste management**, **toilet hygiene** as well as the use of ashes as a disinfectant.
- 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** were distributed in the camp.

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, UNHCR and its partner SOS Desert support the host community in the surroundings of Mberra camp through the construction of water wells to improve **access to water**, the fencing of arable land for **agriculture** as well as **support to local shops** for the community.
- Awareness raising and sensitization activities are carried out in order to promote peaceful coexistence between the refugee and the host community. In September, **two trainings in “Conflict prevention and Management”** and **one focus group discussion** were organized by UNHCR, involving respectively **76** and **14** representatives of different groups **of the host community**.

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. Thanks to this programme, small businesses such as **restaurants, shops, artisanal crafts making and photography** were started among many others.
- UNHCR, through SOS Desert, provides **1,872 women with access to gardening areas** now representing some **eight 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.



Gardening at a household 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 is needed to help reduce refugees' dependency on external 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\$ 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 of 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.

Major donors of unrestricted and regional contributions in 2015 (in USD):

United States Of America (160 M) | Sweden (80 M) | United Kingdom (53 M) | Netherlands (45 M) | Norway (44 M) | Denmark (28 M) | Priv Donors Spain (25M) | Australia (24 M) | Japan (18 M) | Switzerland (16 M) | France (14 M) | Canada (11 M) | Priv Donors Italy (11 M)

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