

## MAURITANIA

### UNHCR OPERATIONAL UPDATE

April 2015

#### KEY FIGURES

**15,061**

Malian households in Mberra camp

**5,672**

Malian refugees with specific needs

**3,787**

People de-activated since December 2014

**30L**

Of potable water available per person per day in Mberra camp

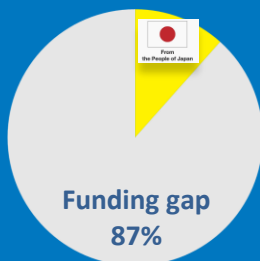
**22**

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.
- Pursue the de-activation exercise of non-Malian refugees registered in UNHCR's database.
- Strengthen support to refugees' self-reliance.
- Finalize the biometric enrollment of the population in Mberra camp's Zone 1.

#### HIGHLIGHTS

- On 27 April, UNHCR started the biometric enrolment of the population living in Zone 1 (Blocks 1 to 5), in Mberra Camp.
- UNHCR is currently completing the verification exercise for individuals registered as refugees in UNHCR's database and presumed to be Mauritanian nationals.



Child at school in Mberra camp  
UNHCR/A.Dragaj/March 2015

- In April, UNHCR prepared the implementation of its new health strategy for urban refugees and asylum seekers in Nouakchott and Nouadhibou. Consultation meetings were organized with refugees, the authorities and partner agencies.
- The April General Food Distribution took place between 15 and 21 April. All the refugees present at the distribution received food rations. Individuals with specific needs who could not attend the distribution received targeted assistance.

#### Population of concern

A total of **53,849** people are assisted by UNHCR in Mauritania

**Malian refugees in Mberra camp**

52,355

**Urban refugees and asylum seekers**

1,494

# UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

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## 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 52,402 Malian refugees in Mberra camp. In addition, the organization protects and assists 862 urban refugees and 632 asylum seekers, mainly from Cote d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic and Senegal.

Since June 2013, UNHCR has been observing a small number of spontaneous returns to Mali. However, despite efforts to stabilize the country, the humanitarian and security situation in Mali remains fragile. Large-scale returns of refugees are therefore not yet envisaged and UNHCR and its partners are maintaining their presence in Bassikounou/Mberra camp to continue the humanitarian response and ensure preparedness in case of a new influx, should the situation deteriorate.

## Achievements



### Protection

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#### Achievements and Impact

- On 27 April, UNHCR started the biometric enrolment of the population living in Zone 1 (Blocks 1 to 5) in Mberra Camp. The enrolment of this population, which should be finalized by the end of May 2015, constitutes the last step of the biometric enrolment exercise of the camp's population initiated in April 2013.
- In parallel to the biometric enrolment in Zone 1, the Joint Review Commission headed by the Hakim of Bassikounou and composed of representatives of UNHCR and partner agencies, continues to review litigious cases for individuals registered as refugees but presumed to be Mauritanian nationals.
- In April, two new sexual and gender-based violence cases were reported in the camp. The victims were assisted by UNHCR through its implementing partner INTERSOS.
- UNHCR continues to provide tailored assistance for the 5,672 individuals with specific needs in Mberra camp, including women and children at risk, single parents and unaccompanied or separated children. The organization, through its partner SOS Desert, distributed 138t of charcoal to 1,600 persons with specific needs and assisted 281 individuals, including disabled persons, during the April food distribution.

## Education

### Achievements and Impact

- As of 30 April, 3 711 children (1,699 girls and 2,012 boys) were registered in the six primary schools of the camp. UNHCR continues to pay incentives for school staffs, including 100 teachers, 6 directors and 6 associate directors. Meetings with the directors and associate directors are organized on a regular basis to follow up on challenges resulting in school dropouts.
- There is currently one teacher for 60 pupils in the camp's primary schools.



UNHCR supports the six primary schools in Mberra camp.  
UNHCR/S. Laroze Barrit/January 2015

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Access to education for all children in the camp remains a challenge for UNHCR and its partners. Multiple activities are conducted with children and parents to promote education for all, in particular for girls and children from minority groups.

## Health

### Achievements and Impact

- On 16 April, UNHCR organized a consultation meeting in Nouakchott to brief urban refugees and asylum seekers on its new health strategy and respond to their questions. A total of 55 individuals attended the meeting. The new health strategy for urban refugees and asylum seekers aims at progressively integrating them into the national health system, providing them with access to public health centers and hospitals.
- In preparation of the implementation of the new health strategy for urban refugees and asylum seekers, UNHCR met with the authorities, hospital directors and partner agencies to develop partnership protocols in order to improve access to health care.
- Between 31 March and 2 April, UNHCR facilitated a training on mental health for doctors and nurses from the Bassikounou Moughataa, with the help of WHO.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Despite UNHCR and partners' health interventions in Mberra camp, some gaps remain, including the absence of a radiology department in Bassikounou. The ongoing construction of a new "Type A" health center with specialized equipment should help reduce the number of evacuations to Nema or Nouakchott in the near future.



## Food Security and Nutrition

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### Achievements and Impact

- From 15 to 21 April 2015, UNHCR distributed food, including rice, pulses and oil, for 51,924 individuals in Mberra camp. Individuals with specific needs who could not attend the distribution received targeted assistance (please see the Protection section for further details).



## Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

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### 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 m<sup>3</sup> of water per day. Refugees have access to potable water through 702 water taps located in all sections of the camp. As a result, refugees can have access to more than 30 liters of potable water per person per day. UNHCR, through its partner *Action contre la Faim*, continues to treat the water with chlorine to prevent the development of waterborne diseases. According to the results of water tests realized every week, the quantity of residual chlorine in water is 0.4 mg /Liter at water taps, 0, 2 mg/Liter at the household level.
- With regard to sanitation and hygiene, 2,362 semi-permanent communal latrines (22 persons/latrine) and 2,690 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 March, awareness campaigns on hygiene were conducted by 17 hygiene promoters and the 44 Sanitation and Hygiene Committees composed of refugees and animators from *Action contre la Faim*. The campaigns aimed at promoting good hygiene practices, including on proper hand-washing, water conservation and prevention of waterborne diseases. It is estimated that awareness campaigns on hygiene benefited some 12,800 refugees in April.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The construction of 49 ventilated latrines in schools in Mberra camp is ongoing and will enhance the sanitation situation in the camp's schools.
- Given the harsh climatic conditions, the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing latrines and showers in the camp is one of UNHCR's sanitation priorities in the camp.

## NFI Non Food Items

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### Achievements and Impact

- In April, UNHCR distributed 25 buckets, 42 cups and 408 pieces of soap to de-activated people in the camp, targeting 25 families.

## Access to Energy

### Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR, through SOS Desert, distributed charcoal for 1,600 individuals with specific needs, covering their energy needs for the next six months.

## Self-Reliance

### Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR continues to provide literacy classes for 159 adults (90 females and 69 males) in the camp. Literacy remains an essential component of UNHCR's strategy to strengthen refugees' capacity and self-reliance.
- In April, UNHCR completed the selection of income-generation projects proposed by refugees in the camp. Out of the 206 proposals received, 80 projects were selected based on several criteria, including vulnerability and their potential for success. The organization will support selected projects through training and financial support, to allow refugees to run their own business. In parallel to these new projects, UNHCR continues to follow up on projects funded in previous years.
- UNHCR, through SOS Desert, continues to provide more than 1,800 women with access to gardening activities in gardening areas representing some five hectares of arable land.



UNHCR supports gardening activities in Mberra camp.  
UNHCR/S. Laroze Barrit/January 2015

## Peaceful coexistence

### Achievements and Impact

- In April, UNHCR, through its partner INTERSOS, conducted nine awareness-raising campaigns on issues related to sexual and gender-based violence and child protection in four towns around Mberra camp, benefiting some 3,700 individuals.
- UNHCR continues to promote peaceful coexistence, including through the organization of socio-cultural events involving persons from the refugee and the host communities. A soccer event was organized in April. In total, some 1,500 individuals from the refugee and the host communities participated.
- In April, UNHCR, through its partner INTERSOS, organized 18 focus group discussions with refugees and individuals from the host community and leaders on different subjects including education and peaceful coexistence.

## 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 UN agencies such as OCHA, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP as well as 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



Urgent funding is needed to enable UNHCR to provide protection and assistance to more than 50,000 refugees in Mberra Camp.  
UNHCR/I.Bocoum/March 2015

Total recorded contributions for the operation amount to some **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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