

Mauritania

15 Decembre 2018

Mauritania hosts over **2,000 urban refugees and asylum-seekers** and almost **56,000 Malian refugees** in and around Mbera camp established in 2012 in the arid south-eastern region close to the Malian border.

Despite the conclusion of a peace agreement in 2015, **large-scale returns of Malian refugees are not expected** due to persistent violence in northern Mali. In October alone, **167 new arrivals** were registered in Mbera camp.

In the context of this protracted situation, UNHCR is engaging with several actors to strengthen the **humanitarian-development nexus**, in order to reduce refugees' needs, risks and vulnerabilities.

KEY INDICATORS

5,831

New arrivals from Mali since January 2018

No

Voluntary returns to Mali facilitated in 2018

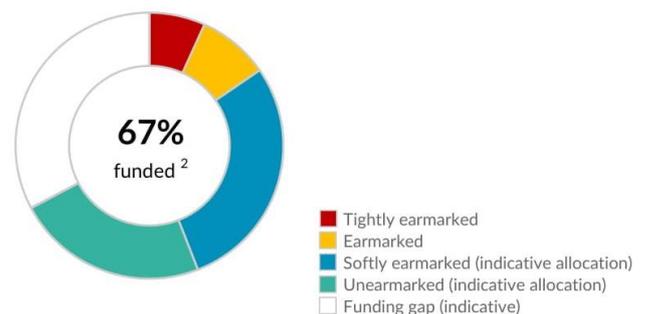
4,753

Malian refugees with **specific needs** (as of 30 November 2018)

FUNDING (AS OF 15 DECEMBER)

USD 20.2 M

13.6 M received. **6.5 M** requested for the UNHCR operation in Mauritania



View of Mbera camp from the water tank © UNHCR/Viola E. Bruttomesso

POPULATION OF CONCERN

Malian refugees in Mbera camp **55,886**

Urban refugees and asylum-seekers **2,504**

A total of **58,390** people are assisted by UNHCR in Mauritania.

Operational Context

In Mauritania, UNHCR provides protection and assistance to **55,886 Malian refugees** in and around **Mbera camp** in south-eastern Mauritania and to **1,403 refugees and 1,101 asylum-seekers in the urban areas** of Nouakchott and Nouadhibou (mainly from the Central African Republic, Syria and Côte d'Ivoire), in a context of mixed movements.

UNHCR works closely with the Mauritanian authorities towards the **development and implementation of a national asylum system**. Pending the adoption of the asylum law, UNHCR supports the authorities to enhance refugee protection in Mauritania improving access to documentation, birth registration, economic opportunities, and basic services such as health and education.

Since 2012, UNHCR has led the **humanitarian response for Malian refugees** in the Hodh Echarghi region, in collaboration with the Mauritanian Government and other UN agencies, national and international NGOs. Mauritania continues to keep its borders open to new influxes. Despite the conclusion of a peace agreement in Mali in June 2015, large-scale returns of refugees are not yet expected due to the prevailing security situation in northern Mali. In June 2016, Mauritania, Mali and UNHCR concluded a Tripartite Agreement for the voluntary repatriation of Malian refugees. This agreement provides a framework to facilitate voluntary return, when the conditions in Mali allow. In the meantime, it reaffirms the commitment of Mauritania and Mali to protect refugees. At present, UNHCR considers that the conditions in Mali are not conducive to promote the return of refugees. However, UNHCR may facilitate voluntary return upon request and on an individual case basis.

Highlights

UNHCR in Mauritania celebrated the beginning of the campaign of **the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence** in Basikounou and in the cities of Nouakchott and Nouadhibou.

In Mbera camp, 600 people, including members of the humanitarian community and refugees, attended the launching ceremony of celebrations. **"No to child marriage"**, the slogan chosen by UNHCR and its partners in the context of the Mbera camp, was reaffirmed through **speeches, sketches and songs** performed by the camp community. The day was an opportunity to further strengthen UNHCR, partners and Mbera community commitment to fight against early marriage, a scourge that stops the development of children, especially girls, by preventing them from continuing their education and building their future.

In Nouakchott, under the slogan **"Hear me too"** through **music, theater, and poems** performed by refugee women, UNHCR in Mauritania and its partners kicked off the 16 days of activism celebrations at ALPD community center for refugees and asylum-seekers.



*Children during the celebration of the kick-off event of the 16 days of activism campaign in Mbera camp.
©UNHCR/Khadijetou Welle*



*Women during a theatre performance at ALPD community centre in Nouakchott
©UNHCR/Viola E. Bruttomesso*

Achievements



PROTECTION

Achievements and Impact

Refugees and asylum-seekers continue to seek safety in Mbera camp with **167 newly registered** in the month of November alone. In urban areas, UNHCR registered **94 new arrivals**. The population decrease from **57,693 in October to 55,866 in November** is mainly caused by the deactivation of **2,191 persons**, of which 2,166 did not show up at the General Food and Cash Distribution for 3 consecutive times.

In urban areas, UNHCR provided **89 refugees with specific needs** with cash assistance, in addition to chronic illness assistance provided to 26 refugees living with HIV/AIDS.

In November, UNHCR continued protecting refugees from statelessness risks. To date, in collaboration with the Mauritanian Government, **44 identity cards** and **314 birth certificates**.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

UNHCR continues its advocacy for refugees' access to civil registration and national documentation. UNHCR also advocates for the inclusion of refugees in national protection systems (health, education, child protection, SGBV) and the establishment of referral mechanisms.



A family waiting to complete the registration process at Mbera camp registration centre ©UNHCR/Viola E. Bruttomesso



EDUCATION

Achievements and Impact

In November, UNHCR continued to monitor the number of students in primary education. In total, **4,601 (2,254 girls and 2,347 boys)** enrolled in the 6 primary school and 2 extensions in Mbera camp. As part of the reinforcement of school attendance, **27,772 meals** were distributed in the school canteens thanks to food supplied by the WFP and prepared on a voluntary basis by refugee women.

In Mbera camp, UNHCR and World Vision International continue to carry out adults literacy courses in the main four languages of the camp, namely Tamashek, Arabic, Songhai and Fula. As per November, **116 people including 98 women** are currently learning how to write in their own language.



A teacher giving math classes in Mbera camp school n.4 ©UNHCR/Viola E. Bruttomesso

During the reporting period, registration in schools in urban areas for the 2018/2019 school year have been finalized. In total between Nouakchott and Nouadhibou, **292 children registered in primary school**, and **204 refugee students registered in secondary school**. ALPD, UNHCR partner in urban areas, proceeded with the distribution of school kits to all students. In addition to these, UNCHR registered **12 refugees enrolled in tertiary education**.

**HEALTH****Achievements and Impact**

Following the announcement of the departure of the main health actor in Mbera camp, Médecins sans Frontières (MSF), UNHCR engaged in advocacy efforts with the Ministry of Health, Unicef and WHO as well as donors to ensure the provision of basic health services is maintained in Mbera camp from January 2019. In December, **UNHCR and the Mauritanian government signed an agreement to maintain the health services provided to the refugee community in Mbera camp and Bassikounou host community.** From 1 January 2019, the Mauritanian Ministry of Health, in partnership with the NGO ALIMA, will provide the basic health care to refugees from Mbera camp **for a transitional period ending in 2020.** This agreement will benefit also the host community as the Ministry of Health will provide additional medical staff for the proper functioning of Bassikounou Health Center.

In November, UNHCR facilitated the evacuation **of 36 patients with secondary and tertiary health care needs to facilities** with higher treatment plateaus. **23 refugees were provided cash support to cover medical needs.** UNHCR also continued to step up its support to the delivery of health care at Mbera camp to make up for the departure of MSF.

In addition, **377 urban refugees received health care assistance** including check-ups, medical visits and surgeries.

**FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION****Achievements and Impact**

In November, UNHCR in partnership with the World Food Programme (WFP) distributed **only cash** (100 MRU per person per month) with electronic cards **to 53,686 refugees** (13,112 families). During the food and cash distribution, in collaboration with its partners WFP, LWF, *Action contre la Faim* and CSA, UNHCR assisted and accompanied **804 Persons with Specific Needs.** The **introduction of the Global Distribution Tool (GDT)** has enabled UNHCR to enhance its distribution tracking and verification processes, and the protection of children who are sent to collect the food ration on behalf of their families.



Cash distribution in one of the Mbera camp distribution centres ©UNHCR/Viola E. Bruttomesso

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

Refugees in Mbera camp are dependent on food assistance due to very scarce local resources. From October to December 2018, WFP faces a US\$ 2.7 million shortfall (63% of the 3-month requirements) for its assistance to Malian refugees. UNHCR works with partners to improve access to gardening fields and livestock to reduce refugees' dependency on food assistance. Development interventions are needed in the Hodh Echargui region to help both refugee and host communities become more resilient.

**WATER AND SANITATION****Achievements and Impact**

UNHCR and its partner *Action contre la Faim* (ACF) ensure that all refugees in the camp have access to clean water and sanitation facilities, including **2,035 functioning latrines.**

In Mbera camp, the hygiene sensitizations activities continued and focused on awareness raising techniques with **991 sessions organized by the focal points**. In total, 3,741 men, 5,087 women, 3,442 girls, 3,442 boys participated in different sessions.

During the month of October, UNHCR continued with routine monitoring and network management activities **to make the water system in Mbera camp more efficient**. These maintenance works included the change of 45 taps in all areas, the repair of 21 taps, the replace of 10 valve to reduce water loss, the clogging of 9 leaks, and the maintenance of meters.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

Water supply in Mbera camp is still highly dependent on humanitarian assistance. UNHCR has contributed to an initial investment into the water infrastructure of the camp, but more funds are needed to ensure a smooth transition from emergency to more durable and sustainable water systems in Mbera camp and its surroundings. These investments are crucial given the risks of drought in the region.



SHELTER AND NFIS

Achievements and Impact

As part of the shelter distribution activities, **UNHCR conducted a physical check of the 6,450 potential beneficiary lists in Mbera camp and identified 2,441 people that will receive new shelter kits**.

UNHCR continues to **rehabilitate the infrastructure of the Mbera camp**, including: school gates, school fences and canteens, community centers, distribution centers, and the registration center. The **UNHCR/Mbera warehouse, the gendarmerie station garages and the new connectivity center** were also rehabilitated and/or furnished during the period.



PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE AND SELF RELIANCE

Achievements and Impact

In November, to foster refugees and host community resilience, **2 steering committees composed of beneficiaries, authorities, partners and UNHCR**, were established. Their mandate will be to carry out a joint monitoring of the resilience activities in the camp and host villages. During the reporting period, UNHCR main protection partner in Mbera camp, World Vision, identified **52 associations that will benefit of the support of the Incoming Generation Activities (IGAs) project**.

World Vision also provided a training session on Entrepreneurial Skills and Business Plans to **64 beneficiaries**, which allowed each beneficiary to establish a business plan. These activities will be put in place thanks to the support of the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa.

During the reporting period, UNHCR'S partner SOS Desert supported Bassikounou men's craftsmen's cooperatives **with four income-generating activities**. The women's cooperative of the village of Touil El Bourada was supported with butcher's equipment in addition to) material and equipment for the community shop.



*Women from the host community of one of the village in Bassikounou area
©UNHCR/Viola E. Bruttomesso*

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 Interior and Decentralization and local authorities. UNHCR leads and coordinates the Refugee Coordination mechanism at Mbera Camp. UNHCR also participates in the United Nations Country Team and Humanitarian Country Team and works closely with national and international NGOs.

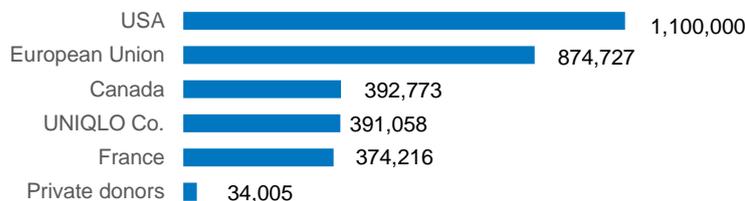
UNHCR, jointly with the Mauritanian Government, representatives of UN agencies and international NGOs signed the 2018-2022 United Nations' Sustainable Development Partnership Framework (CPDD), which integrates humanitarian and development interventions and includes a strategy to strengthen peaceful coexistence and self-reliance for refugees and host communities in Mauritania's border areas.

Financial Information

UNHCR is grateful for the support provided by donors who have contributed to this operation. UNHCR also expresses gratitude especially towards those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with un-earmarked and softly earmarked funds.

EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

Earmarked contributions for the operation amount to some **US\$ 3.1 million**.



SOFTLY EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

Germany 46.8 million | United States of America 16.4 million | Private donors Australia 13.5 million | Denmark 5.7 million | Private donors Germany 5.2 million | Sweden 4.4 million | Finland 4.3 million | Private donors Republic of Korea 4.1 million | Private donors Switzerland 3.2 million | Norway 3.2 million | Japan 2.8 million | Private donors Sweden 2.8 million | Holy See | Iceland | Liechtenstein | Malta | Poland | Romania | Private donor

UNEARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

Sweden 98.2 million | Private donors Spain 71 million | Netherlands 47.1 million | United Kingdom 45.3 million | Norway 42.5 million | Private donors Republic of Korea 32 million | Japan 26.5 million | Denmark 25.5 million | Private donors Japan 17.9 million | Private donors Italy 16.8 million | Switzerland 15.8 million | France 14 million | Germany 13.7 million | Private donors Sweden 13.2 million | Italy 11.2 million | Algeria | Argentina | Austria | Belgium | Bosnia and Herzegovina | Bulgaria | Canada | Chile | China | Costa Rica | Estonia | Finland | Holy See | Iceland | India | Indonesia | Ireland | Israel | Kuwait | Latvia | Liechtenstein | Lithuania | Luxembourg | Monaco | Montenegro | New Zealand | Philippines | Portugal | Qatar | Republic of Korea | Russian Federation | Saudi Arabia | Serbia | Singapore | Slovakia | Sri Lanka | Thailand | Turkey | United Arab Emirates | Uruguay | Private donors

External / Donor Relations

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LINKS



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Stories

Annex

Breakdown of the main refugee groups in Mauritania

