

MAURITANIA

UNHCR OPERATIONAL UPDATE

March 2015

KEY FIGURES

15,103

Malian households in Mberra camp

5,635

Malian refugees with specific needs

3,705

People de-activated since December 2014

30L

Of potable water available per person per day in Mberra camp

21

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

HIGHLIGHTS

- On 19 March, UNHCR and partner UN agencies organized a [high-level consultation meeting](#) in« Nouakchott on the humanitarian situation in Mberra camp and host villages. During the meeting, the Representatives of UNHCR and partner UN agencies presented the existing interventions in Mberra camp and in the host community and their impact on beneficiaries.
- Between 25 and 26 March, UNHCR participated in a visit of a delegation composed of representatives from ECHO and DFID in Mberra camp and surrounding villages.
- Between 26 and 27 March, the Ambassadors of France and Japan in Mauritania and their Attaché as well as representatives of the United Kingdom, Spain and the European Union participated in a high level visit to Mberra refugee camp and host villages organized by UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNFPA and IOM. The visit was the occasion for the participants to observe the impact of the international funding granted to the programmes implemented in response to the Malian refugee crisis since 2012.
- In Mberra camp, UNHCR continues to offer protection and assistance to more than 52,000 Malian refugees. In March, the organization launched through its partner INTERSOS, a literacy programme for 106 adults in Tamashek and Arabic languages.



Population of concern

A total of **53,915** people are assisted by UNHCR in Mauritania

Malian refugees in Mberra camp

52,566

Urban refugees and asylum seekers

1,349

UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

Operational Context



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

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 758 urban refugees and 591 asylum seekers, mainly from Cote d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic and Senegal.

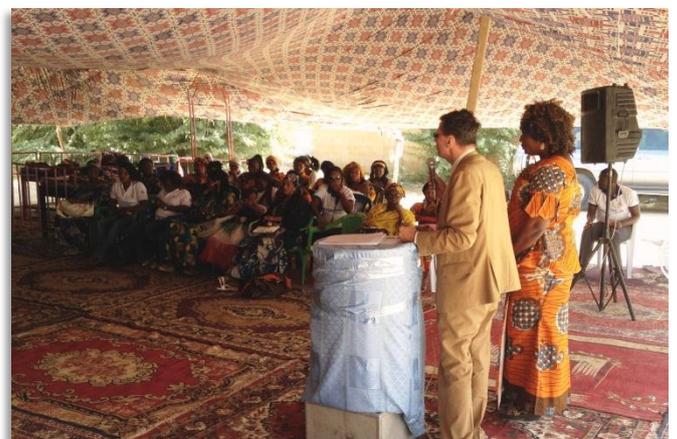
Since June 2013, UNHCR has been observing a small number of spontaneous returns to Mali. However, despite efforts to stabilize the country, including the deployment of a peacekeeping force and the presidential elections in mid-2013, the humanitarian and security situation in Mali remains fragile. Large-scale 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

Achievements and Impact

- Between 8 and 10 March, UNHCR in Mberra camp and Nouakchott celebrated International Women's Day under the following theme: *Women empowerment - empowerment of humanity: imagine!* Several events were organized to pay tribute to refugee women in Mauritania and to raise awareness on several challenges faced by them such as gender-based violence and the lack of access to economic opportunities.
- In March, a delegation of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, accompanied with the Resettlement Support Center Africa, conducted a mission in Mauritania and reviewed 20 cases (corresponding to 26 urban refugees) submitted by UNHCR for resettlement.



The UNHCR Representative gave a speech in front of urban refugee women in Nouakchott during International Women's Day UNHCR/S. Laroze Barrit/March 2015

- From 10 to 17 March 2015, UNHCR and the Ministry of the Interior and Decentralization (MIDEC) organized trainings on refugee rights for police and gendarmerie officers in Koubeni and Rosso, as part of UNHCR's capacity building programme.
- On 2 March, UNHCR finalized the registration of 222 new births that occurred mainly between September 2014 and January 2015 in Mberra camp.
- In Mberra camp, UNHCR launched the first phase of the [Gender-based violence information management system](#), which was established to harmonize data collection on sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in humanitarian settings. In addition, UNHCR held a multi-sectoral meeting with its partners (UNICEF, Action Against Hunger, the Lutheran World Federation, INTERSOS and *SOS Désert*) in order to discuss existing SGBV risks in the camp and review reporting and response mechanisms.
- In March, UNHCR through its implementing partner INTERSOS, conducted several activities to raise awareness on issues related to SGBV and child marriage, including two focus group discussions, one movie projection followed by a debate and a meeting with families of SGBV survivors. A total of 146 individuals benefited from these activities.
- UNHCR, assisted by its partner the Lutheran World Federation, conducted trainings for the watchmen in Mberra camp on the organization's mandate and international protection principles. There are currently 106 watchmen in the camp who are responsible for the reporting of protection incidents to the authorities and relevant UNHCR and partners' staff.
- A total of three Best Interest Determinations were conducted in March to take action on urgent matters regarding the safety and well-being of 10 Malian children in Mberra camp.
- UNHCR continues to place emphasis on the protection and assistance of individuals with specific needs in Mberra camp. The organization, through its implementing partner INTERSOS, conducted 1,338 home visits for persons with specific needs and assisted 70 individuals with non-food items and 19 with cash.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- While UNHCR and its partners have significantly strengthened their child protection case management system, gaps remain and additional trainings on case management and UNHCR child-protection tools need to be conducted.

Education

Achievements and Impact

- As of March, 3 690 children (1 693 girls and 1 997 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.
- In March, UNHCR launched a literacy programme in Mberra camp for 106 adults in Tamashek and Arabic languages with its implementing partner INTERSOS. Beneficiaries enrolled in this programme receive writing, reading and counting courses, which will in turn strengthen their self-reliance.



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

- Focus group discussions with Koranic school teachers were held in March to highlight the importance of formal education in Mberra camp and determine how to better adjust school schedules to allow children to attend both formal and Koranic curriculums.

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 all stakeholders to promote education for all, in particular for girls and children from minority groups.



Health

Achievements and Impact

- In March, 80 medical evacuations of Malian refugees from Bassikounou to secondary and tertiary structures were organized.
- From 3 to 5 March, a workshop was held in Bassikounou with partner agencies to draft the health and nutrition strategy for 2016.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Despite UNHCR and partners' health interventions in the 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 evacuation number in the near future.



Food Security and Nutrition

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR, through its partner SOS Desert, continues to support dairy farmers in Mberra camp. In March, 32 dairy units were assisted, including through the provision of guidance on the production and conservation of milk and through the purchase of food for the cattle.
- UNHCR launched a pilot distribution project of 500 dairy goats to Malian refugees in Mberra camp, targeting vulnerable households. The project will help promote food security in the camp and stabilize the nutrition situation of malnourished children and pregnant and lactating women.



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 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 Against Hunger, 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, 2,440 semi-permanent communal latrines (21 persons/latrine) and 2,690 communal showers (19 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 promotion were conducted by 17 hygiene promoters and the 44 Sanitation and Hygiene Committees composed of refugees and animators from Action Against Hunger. The campaigns aimed at promoting good hygiene practices, including on proper hand-washing, water conservation and prevention of waterborne diseases.

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.

Access to Energy

Achievements and Impact

- In March, 179 gas cylinders were distributed to 179 persons with specific needs.

Self-Reliance and Peaceful coexistence

Achievements and Impact

- In March, UNHCR through its implementing partner INTERSOS conducted several activities benefiting the host community living around Mberra camp, including:
 - One training for teachers in Fassala and five sensitization campaigns in Bassikounou schools on issues related to SGBV;
 - One awareness and sensitization campaign on peaceful coexistence and two campaigns on early marriage and girls' access to education; and
 - Two focus group discussions on ways to maintain peace, conducted by the community-based Mixed Committee, composed of refugees and members of the host community.
- UNHCR briefed refugees, in all the Blocs in Mberra camp, on its support programme to income-generation projects. A total of 1,734 persons including 1,325 women and 409 men participated. Following the presentation, UNHCR received more than 170 proposals for micro-projects that were reviewed, based on several criteria, including vulnerability and their potential for success. Support to income-generation projects in the camp is an important initiative that contributes to strengthening refugees' livelihoods and self-reliance.
- UNHCR, through SOS Desert, continues to provide 1,807 women access to gardening activities in gardening areas representing some five hectares of arable land.

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.
- On 19 March, UNHCR and partner UN agencies organized a [high-level consultation meeting](#) in Nouakchott on the situation in Mberra camp and host villages. The meeting was well attended with more than 40 participants, including the Minister of Finance and the Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as the Ambassadors of France, Egypt and South Africa and other representatives of the authorities, embassies and partner organizations. The meeting was the occasion for the Representatives of UNHCR and partner UN agencies to present humanitarian programmes in Mberra camp and in the host community.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

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.

ANNEXES

Population Statistics-Mberra Camp (as of 1 April 2015)

Age & Gender							
	0-4	5-11	12-17	18-59	60+	Total	
Female	4,149	7,557	3,200	12,607	1,568	29,081	55.3%
Male	4,216	7,349	3,208	7,541	1,171	23,485	44.7%
Total	8,365	14,906	6,408	20,148	2,739	52,566	
	15.91%	28.36%	12.19%	38.33%	5.21%		

Infrastructures available in Mberra Camp

				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 reception center 4 community centres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 health posts 1 health center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 distributions centers (food and non-food items) 1 Intensive Nutritional Recovery and Education Centre (CRENI) 4 Nutritional Rehabilitation Centres for Severe Malnutrition (CRENAS) 6 Nutritional Rehabilitation Centres for Moderate Severe Malnutrition (CRENAM) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 boreholes 702 water taps 2,440 semi-permanent communal latrines 2,690 communal showers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 primary schools and canteens 1 secondary school 6 child-friendly spaces

Contacts:

Sebastien Laroze Barrit, Associate Reporting Officer, DER/DRRM, larozes@unhcr.org, +222 22 68 55 51

Links:

[Unhcr.org](http://unhcr.org)- [UNHCR Sahel portal](#)- [Facebook](#)