

# MAURITANIA

## UNHCR OPERATIONAL UPDATE

January 2015

### KEY FIGURES

**15,086**

Malian households in Mberra camp

**5,629**

Malian refugees with specific needs

**3,613**

People de-activated since  
December 2014

**29.5L**

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

**Funding gap  
100%**

### PRIORITIES

- Maintain protection and assistance for the 52,943 Malian refugees in Mberra camp.
- Pursue the de-activation exercise (some 18,000 cases to be reviewed by the Joint Review Commission).
- Strengthen support to refugees' self-reliance.
- Reinforce peaceful coexistence between the refugee and host communities.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- In January, UNHCR completed the first phase of the de-activation exercise that started in December 2014. The first phase concerned 9,382 individuals (3,224 families) in Mberra camp where no individuals were registered as Malians in the national database of the *Agence Nationale du Registre des Populations et des Titres Sécurisés*.



- UNHCR organized participatory Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming (AGDM) sessions, in Nouakchott and in Mberra camp to better identify specific needs for each group of refugees in Mauritania and discuss strategies for 2016/2017.
- Based on the SMART/SENS nutrition survey, agencies have developed strategies to combat malnutrition in the camp, leading to a substantial reduction of the Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) and Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) rates from, respectively 13,2% and 3,2% in 2012 to 9,9% and 0,5% in 2014. These malnutrition rates are now below the alarm thresholds of 10% for GAM and 2% for SAM.
- In January, 51,774 Malian refugees received food during the monthly distribution in Mberra camp.

#### Population of concern

A total of **53,192** people are assisted by UNHCR in Mauritania

**Malian refugees in Mberra camp**

51,843

**Urban refugees and asylum seekers**

1,349

## 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 51,843 Malian refugees in Mberra camp. In addition, the organization protects and assists 758 urban refugees and 591 asylum seekers



Mberra camp S. Laroze Barrit/UNHCR- January 2015

in Nouakchott and Nouadhibou, mainly from Cote d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic and Senegal.

The situation in northern Mali remains fragile and is unlikely to allow for a large-scale return of Malian refugees residing in Mauritania in the short to medium term.

### Achievements



Protection

#### Achievements and Impact

- From 19 to 27 January 2015, UNHCR organized an AGDM participatory evaluation with the urban refugees in Nouakchott and Nouadhibou. The objective of this exercise was to identify the needs of urban refugees in Mauritania and involve them in the development of UNHCR's assistance programme for 2016/2017. In total 94 individuals (including 42 women and 52 men), forming a representative sample of the refugee population, participated in the exercise.
- In addition, UNHCR organized an AGDM session in Mberra camp, targeting some 130 Malian. During the session, the beneficiaries expressed their appreciation for giving them this opportunity to share their problems and discuss ways to improve their situation.

- From 28 to 30 January, UNHCR accompanied a mission of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to Mberra camp. The goal of the mission was to assess human rights challenges in the camp and identify responses. Meetings with UNHCR's implementing partners, local Mauritanian authorities, refugee leaders and refugee families (through home-visits) were organized.
- UNHCR finalized the recruitment of 108 watchmen for the camp. Watchmen will be a valuable tool in the overall security scheme of the camp. After a specific protection training, watchmen will monitor and report incidents to the authorities and UNHCR.
- In January UNHCR, through its implementing partner, Intersos conducted 139 home visits to individuals with specific needs (including, among others, women and children at risk, single parents, unaccompanied or separate children) and 62 counseling sessions.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- During the AGDM session in Mberra, refugees expressed concerns regarding the lack of access to birth certificate for children born outside of health centers. UNHCR continues to advocate for the systematic provision of birth certificates to newborns.

## Education

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### Achievements and Impact

- Improving children's access to school in Mberra camp is among UNHCR's main priorities. In January, several activities were conducted to support primary education:
  - UNHCR rehabilitated 59 classroom roofs with more robust material.
  - The organization provides incentives for 100 teachers in the camp (including 20 women) and 6 directors and associate directors for the 6 primary schools in the camp.
  - UNHCR and its partners sensitize parents and children through home visits and discussions in community centers and other community infrastructures.
- In January, UNHCR started an accelerated learning program for 203 children (104 girls and 101 boys) aged 10 or above who were not previously registered in schools. The program is focusing on the primary school first year program.
- On 27 January, UNHCR, UNICEF, Intersos, the Lutheran World Federation and *Ensemble pour la solidarité et le développement* approved the adoption and implementation of a Code of Conduct for Mberra camp's teachers, which will help promote ethical behavior.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- As of January 2015, 3,958 children are enrolled in primary school, out of a population of 14,971 primary-school-aged children (including 7,580 girls). While all children in the camp can access primary school, the level of enrolment remains low, at 26%. One of the main reasons for this limited enrolment is the nomadic life-style of refugees that leaves little space to formal education of children.
- During the AGDM sessions, beneficiaries called for an improvement in the quality of the teaching and a deeper involvement of teachers with their students.



## Achievements and Impact

- In January, 48 evacuations from Bassikounou to Néma were organized for serious medical cases that needed to be referred to secondary or tertiary care.

## Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Continued support to health facilities in Mberra Camp from UNHCR and partners has significantly improved the health situation in the camp over the past three years. In 2014, the crude mortality rate decreased from 0.7/1000/month to 0.6/1000/month between January and December.



## Food Security and Nutrition

### Achievements and Impact

- According to the global WFP/UNHCR Memorandum of Understanding and the local tripartite agreement between WFP, UNHCR and its implementing partner, the *Commissariat à la Sécurité Alimentaire (CSA)*, WFP procures and delivers food to its extended delivery point in Bassikounou. UNHCR transports the food rations to Mberra camp, manages the stock and distributes the food rations to the refugees through the CSA on a monthly basis in the five distribution centers of the camp.
- In January, 51,774 refugees (15,057 households) received food during the monthly distribution organized by UNHCR through its implementing partner, the CSA. Please see below the composition of the food basket:

	Daily ration (g)	Monthly ration (Kg)
Rice	400	12,00
Pulses	100	3,00
Oil	25	0,75
<b>Total</b>	<b>525</b>	<b>15,75</b>

- During the distribution, UNHCR conducted a food basket monitoring through its implementing partner, *Acción contra el Hambre*, to verify the quantity and quality of the distributed food items. The monitoring consists of randomly selecting a sample of beneficiaries after they have collected their food package. Food packages are weighted to ensure that all families receive the established ration of food.

## Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Since the beginning of the crisis, nutrition surveys and studies, including SMART and SMART/SENS surveys, in Mberra Camp have enabled UNHCR and partners to better understand and address malnutrition among the refugee population. Based on these surveys, agencies have developed strategies to combat malnutrition in the camp, leading to a substantial reduction of the Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) and Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) rates from, respectively 13,2% and 3,2% in 2012 to 9,9% and 0,5% in 2014. While these malnutrition rates are now below the alarm thresholds of 10% for GAM and 2% for SAM, UNHCR and partners need to maintain their efforts to further reduce malnutrition among refugees living in the camp.

Please find below a table summarizing the GAM and SAM decreases between 2012 and 2014.

	End of 2012	End of 2013	End of 2014
Global Acute Malnutrition rate	13,2%	11,8%	9,9%
Severe Acute Malnutrition rate	3,2%	1,4%	0,8%

- WFP is currently facing funding shortfalls of approximately USD 4 million that will significantly affect the food distribution in 2015. As a consequence, beneficiaries will only receive a reduced ration in the coming months.

## Shelter and NFIs

### Achievements and Impact

- In January, UNHCR distributed 906 semi-durable shelters. A total of 106 kits were distributed to people with specific needs.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- At the beginning of the emergency in 2012, some 10,600 emergency shelters were distributed. Most of them deteriorated due to the harsh climatic conditions in the area. After June 2012, UNHCR started distributing semi-permanent shelter kits composed of locally-purchased material (including wood, cloth and plastic sheeting). In 2015, UNHCR supports the rehabilitation of refugees' shelters when necessary. Refugees rehabilitate their own shelters with material provided by UNHCR while the more vulnerable ones are assisted by UNHCR's implementing partner, the Lutheran World Federation.

## Camp Coordination

### Achievements and Impact

- In January, 43 auxiliaries from the refugee community in the 43 camp blocks carried out awareness raising through a door-to-door campaign, delivering key messages on hygiene, information on the general food and non-food item distribution, reaching some 10,000 refugees.

## Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

### Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR continues to treat the water with chlorine to prevent development of waterborne disease. According to the results of water tests realized every week, the quantity of residual chlorine in water is 0.5 mg / L at water taps, 0, 2 mg/L at the household level.
- Awareness campaigns on hygiene promotion were conducted by 15 hygiene promoters and the 43 Sanitation and Hygiene Committees composed of refugees and animators from *Acción contra el Hambre*. Campaigns aim to promote good hygiene practices, including on proper hand-washing, water conservation and prevention of waterborne diseases.

## Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- 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 can access water through 699 water taps located in all sections of the camp. As a result, refugees have access to 29.5 liters of potable water per person per day in Mberra Camp. In 2015, UNHCR continues maintaining the water infrastructure in the camp, through the maintenance of boreholes and the rehabilitation of water taps.
- To date, 2,270 semi-permanent communal latrines (22 persons/latrine) and 2,520 communal showers (20 persons/shower) are operational in the camp. In addition, there are four areas of solid waste management (sorting, incineration and/or landfill) and 80 public wash areas are operational in Mberra camp. In 2015, UNHCR will rehabilitate deteriorated latrines and showers in the camp.



## Self-Reliance and Peaceful coexistence

### Achievements and Impact

- In April-May 2013, UNHCR and the national registration agency (ANRPTS) launched a joint biometric exercise in Mberra camp. After crosschecking the data, it was confirmed that some 20,000 individuals who were registered as refugees in 2012/2013 were in fact Mauritanian nationals. Following extensive consultations with the Government and partners, as well as careful sensitization of the refugees and host community, and with the full support and involvement of the local authorities, UNHCR initiated the de-activation of Mauritanian nationals registered as refugees. The organization worked together with a Joint Review Commission composed of representatives of the authorities and UN organizations. So far, almost 9,400 cases (individuals) have been reviewed, out of which, some 3,600 individuals were de-activated.
- In the second half of February, the Commission will start working on the third and last batch of more than 4,335 families (18,000 individuals) that are composed of persons registered as Malians and Mauritians within the same families. De-activated individuals continue to have access to essential services in the camp such as shelter, water, health and education.
- On 26 January, UNHCR distributed 9 sewing kits targeting 73 beneficiaries (63 women and 10 men) through its implementing partner Intersos. The distribution of kits will help strengthen the livelihood of refugees. In the framework of its self-reliance strategy, UNHCR is also implementing income-generation projects for refugees through its implementing partners *Acción contra el Hambre* and *SOS Desert*.



In Mberra camp, vulnerable refugees have access to gardening activities (UNHCR/S. Laroze Barrit-January 2015)

## 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 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.
- In January, UNHCR led the revision of the Refugee Chapter of the 2014-2016 Strategic Response Plan for Mauritania. The organization met with partners involved in the protection and assistance of refugees in the camp to agree on common indicators and targets for 2015 and coordinated the drafting of projects.
- UNHCR joined the visit of a USAID Delegation to Mberra camp and hosting villages from 22-23 January, organized by WFP.

## FINANCIAL INFORMATION

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No contribution has been recorded for the operation in 2015.

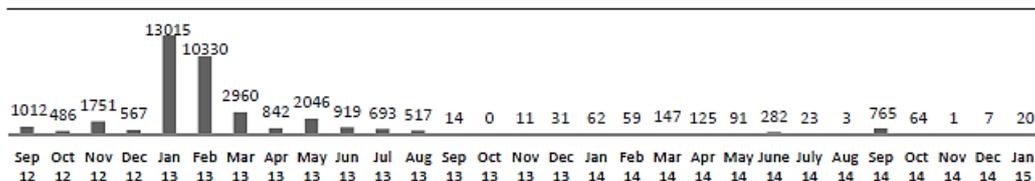
UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have contributed to this operation in previous years, as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programs with unearmarked and broadly earmarked funds.

# ANNEXES

## 1. Population Statistics-Mberra Camp (as of 31 January 2015)

Age & Gender							
	0-4	5-11	12-17	18-59	60+	Total	
Female	3,861	7,535	3,193	12,586	1,564	28,739	55.4%
Male	3,882	7,322	3,209	7,526	1,165	23,104	44.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,743</b>	<b>14,857</b>	<b>6,402</b>	<b>20,112</b>	<b>2,729</b>	<b>51,843</b>	
	14.94%	28.66%	12.35%	38.79%	5.26%		

Malian New Arrival



## 2. Infrastructures available in Mberra Camp (as of 31 January 2015)

				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 reception center</li> <li>4 community centres</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 health posts</li> <li>1 health center</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 distributions centers (food and non-food items)</li> <li>1 Intensive Nutritional Recovery and Education Centre (CRENI)</li> <li>4 Nutritional Rehabilitation Centres for Severe Malnutrition (CRENAS)</li> <li>6 Nutritional Rehabilitation Centres for Moderate Severe Malnutrition (CRENAM)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 boreholes</li> <li>699 water taps</li> <li>2,270 semi-permanent communal latrines</li> <li>2,520 communal showers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6 schools and canteens</li> <li>6 child-friendly spaces</li> </ul>

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