

## MAURITANIA

### UNHCR OPERATIONAL UPDATE

May 2015

#### KEY FIGURES

**226**

New arrivals from Mali (since the end of April)

**14,185**

Malian households in Mberra camp

**5,408**

Malian refugees with specific needs

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

#### HIGHLIGHTS

- Following recent episodes of violence sparking in Northern Mali, a new inflow of 226 Malian refugees was registered in Mauritania since the end of April. The refugees were transferred to Mberra camp and received adequate assistance from UNHCR and its partners.



Family portrait in Mberra camp.  
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- On 12 May, the final version of the Mauritanian draft National Refugee Law was officially adopted by the *Commission nationale consultative pour les réfugiés*.
- The six-month verification process of more than 25,000 individuals in Mberra whose nationality was in doubt was successfully completed with the confirmation of Malian nationality for 10,553 refugees and the de-activation of 3,708 people who were found to be Mauritanian nationals. The remainder was referred for further verification.
- On 19 May, a UNHCR delegation composed of the Director of the Regional Bureau for the Middle-East and North-Africa, the Representative in Mauritania and the Head of the North Africa Desk met with the Mauritanian Head of State and the Prime Minister, reaffirming the existing strong collaboration between UNHCR and the Mauritanian Government in the humanitarian response to the Malian crisis.

#### Population of concern (as of 1 June 2015)

A total of **50,951** people are assisted by UNHCR in Mauritania

**Malian refugees in Mberra camp**

49,478

**Urban refugees and asylum seekers**

1,473

# 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 49,478 Malian refugees in Mberra camp. In addition, the organization protects and assists 865 urban refugees and 608 asylum seekers, mainly from Côte d'Ivoire, Central African Republic, Syria, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Senegal.

Lately, recent violence in Northern Mali sparked new waves of displacements and 226 new arrivals in Mauritania have been registered since the end of April. 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 in Mberra Camp.

## Achievements



Protection

### Achievements and Impact

- On 12 May, UNHCR and the *Commission nationale consultative pour les réfugiés* met to adopt the final version of the Mauritanian draft National Refugee Law. On 18 May, the draft law was officially sent to the Minister of Interior and other key Ministers, as well as the Legislative Commission for their final review and approval before being sent to Parliament.
- Following recent clashes in Nampala, Lere and Tenekou in northern Mali, 226 Malian refugees fled to Mauritania between 27 April – 28 May 2015. The refugees were transferred to Mberra camp and received assistance from UNHCR and its partners.
- On 28 May, UNHCR conducted a training on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse for partner organizations in Nouakchott. The training started with the screening of the film “To Serve with pride: zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse” and was followed by a presentation of the *Secretary-General’s Bulletin* on the prevention of this issue. Finally, UNHCR and its partners discussed ways to improve the reporting mechanisms and ensure respect of the Secretary-General’s Bulletin.



Man undertakes biometric enrolment.

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- During the reporting period, UNHCR completed the biometric enrolment process of blocks 1-5 in Mberra Camp. This exercise, initiated on 27 April, enabled the organization to arrive at more accurate population data.
- In the end of May, UNHCR and the authorities completed the verification process, initiated on December 2014, for more than 25,000 individuals registered as refugees in UNHCR's database and whose nationality was in doubt. This exercise resulted in the decrease of the population figures in Mberra camp between 1 December 2014 (beginning of the exercise) and 31 May 2015 (end of the exercise). See below a table summarizing the results of the exercise.

<b>Population before verification (1 December 2014)</b>	<b>55,414 people (16,424 families)</b>	
<b>Confirmed Malian nationals</b>	<b>10,553 individuals</b>	
<b>Confirmed Mauritanian nationals who were de-activated</b>	<b>3,708 individuals</b>	↓
<b>Individuals whose nationality could not be confirmed</b> by the Joint Commission and who were referred to ANRPTS for further verification while remaining active cases	<b>9,679 individuals</b>	
<b>No shows at the Joint Commission's sessions</b> considered to be litigious cases	<b>1,896 individuals</b>	↓
<b>Increases over the reporting period</b> (new arrivals, births, re-activation of confirmed litigious cases)	<b>1,311 individuals</b>	↑
<b>Decreases over the reporting period other than deactivation</b> (no shows at biometric enrolment and/or general food distribution, deaths and fraudulent cases)	<b>1,643 individuals</b>	↓
<b>Population after verification (31 May 2015)</b>	<b>49,478 people (14,185 families)</b>	

- Five new cases of sexual and gender-based violence were identified and addressed by UNHCR, through its partner INTERSOS. The victims received psychosocial counseling and material assistance.
- UNHCR continues to provide tailored assistance for the 5,408 people with specific needs in Mberra camp, including women and children at risk, single parents and unaccompanied or separated children. The organization, through its partner INTERSOS, carried out 190 home visits in May and provided material support to 73 people with specific needs and five families affected by the death of a member.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Following the population verification exercise, some 10,000 complex cases were referred to the Mauritanian *Agence nationale de registre de population et des titres sécurisés* for further verification.

## Education

### Achievements and Impact

- At present, 3,716 children (1,699 girls and 2,017 boys) are enrolled in the six primary schools in Mberra camp. UNHCR continues supporting education for the refugees in the camp through incentives for school staff, including 100 teachers, 6 directors and 6 associate directors.
- In May, UNHCR provided training on basic hygiene standards to some 100 refugees working in the camp's canteens.



UNHCR promotes education for all in Mberra camp.  
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### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Access to education for all children in the camp remains a challenge for UNHCR and its partners. The organization continues to sensitize the refugee community on the importance of education, in close collaboration with teachers and school directors and involving children and their parents.

## Health

### Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR continues to support primary health care in the camp. In May, 580 refugees were assisted through medical consultations.
- 30 medical cases in need of specialist treatment were evacuated and referred to Nema and Nouakchot hospitals.

## Food Security and Nutrition

### Achievements and Impact

- All refugees received food (rice, pulses and oil) during the monthly distribution organized by UNHCR through its partner, the *Commissariat à la sécurité alimentaire*. During the distribution, UNHCR conducted food basket monitoring through its partner, *Action contre la faim (ACF)*, to verify the quantity and quality of the distributed food items. In May, the food ration distributed represented 1,996 Kcal per person per day.
- Between 5 and 8 May, a joint nutrition screening operation for children and breastfeeding mothers was held in Mberra camp by UNHCR and its partners. The screening results confirmed the expected overall



Women during food preparation in Mberra Camp.  
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improvement of nutritional indicators such as the Global Acute Malnutrition rate which remains below the 10% alarm threshold.

## 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 704 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, 2,366 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 73 public wash areas.
- Through its partner *Action contre la Faim*, UNHCR finalized the construction of 49 ventilated latrines for schools in Mberra camp.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps.

- Due to the harsh climatic conditions, maintenance and rehabilitation of existing latrines and showers in the camp is one of UNHCR's sanitation priorities.

## Access to Energy

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### Achievements and Impact

- This year, UNHCR is implementing a gas distribution pilot project, through its partner SOS Desert, benefiting 200 people with specific needs. In addition, UNHCR provides charcoal to 1,500 families with specific needs.

## Self-Reliance and Peaceful coexistence

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### Achievements and Impact

- In Mberra camp, UNHCR places particular attention on strengthening refugees' self-reliance. The organization continues following up on more than 150 income-generating projects funded in 2013 and 2014, including sewing activities, butcheries and small shops. In addition, 80 new projects for 2015 are currently underway.
- UNHCR continues to promote peaceful coexistence between the host and refugee communities through sensitization activities. In May, eight thematic discussions were carried out, involving members of the host community in Bassikounou and neighboring villages.

- UNHCR, through its partner SOS Desert, continues to provide access to gardening activities for more than 1,800 women in the camp.
- In assistance to the host population, UNHCR through its partner *Action contre la faim*, set up a water supply system (a borehole, a water tower and five public water points) for the benefit of Mberra village, where an estimated 80 households will benefit from this new infrastructure.
- As part of its strategy to strengthen self-reliance in the camp, UNHCR provides literacy classes targeting 217 adults in Mberra camp.
- Within UNHCR's vocational training program for urban refugees and asylum seekers, 73 applications were received and assessed by a joint committee composed of UNHCR and its partner the *Association pour la lutte contre la pauvreté et le sous développement* (ALPD). A total of 59 individuals (including 47 men and 12 women) were selected to undertake training in the following sectors: "Accounting and management", "Information and technology", "Office automation", "Network maintenance", "Electricity and construction", "Welding and driving". The training will last six months for some refugees and three months for others depending on the module.



Inauguration of the water tower in Mberra village  
©UNHCR/Ibrahim Bocoum

## 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 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.

Please note that a [Joint UNHCR-WFP Press Release](#) was issued on 4 June to highlight the current funding shortages faced by the two organizations with regard to their assistance to Malian refugees in Mauritania.

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### Links:

