

## MAURITANIA

### UNHCR OPERATIONAL UPDATE

As of 11 May 2016

#### HIGHLIGHTS

- On 22 April, following recent violent episodes in northern Mali, a group of eight families comprising **about 30 people, mostly children**, reached the border towns of Fassala and Medala. The families sought refuge in Mauritania after being displaced from the areas of Tenekou and Nyono.
- UNHCR in collaboration with the Mauritanian *Agence Nationale du Registre de Population et Titres Sécurisés* (ANRPTS) has completed a **verification process** which was started in 2014 to confirm nationality of people registered in UNHCR's database. 8,318 individuals who were confirmed to be Mauritanian nationals have been de-activated from the database in April 2016. These Mauritanian families were assisted and will continue to have access to essential services in the camp, such as water and health services. **11,869** people were de-activated from UNHCR's database after being confirmed Mauritanian nationals during the verification exercise.



UNHCR registers new arrivals. ©UNHCR 2016

- Between March and April 2016, UNHCR facilitated the voluntary return of **265 Malians to their country**, some of whom have lived in Mbera camp since 2012. More than 1,100 individuals have been assisted to voluntarily return to Mali since January 2015.
- On 12 April, the **United States Ambassadors in Mali and in Mauritania**, H.Es Folmsbee and Andre respectively, visited Mbera camp. This mission enabled the Ambassadors to have direct exchange with forcibly displaced groups of women, youth and families to have a better understanding of their conditions in Mauritania. The visit took place after the U.S Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration gave a generous contribution of **USD 8.5 million** to UNHCR's regional response to the Mali situation, which focuses on resilience and peaceful coexistence in Mali in neighboring countries.

#### Population of concern (as of 1 May 2016)

A total of **42,985** people are assisted by UNHCR in Mauritania

<b>Malian refugees in Mbera camp</b>	41,113
<b>Urban refugees and asylum seekers</b>	1,872

#### KEY FIGURES

**1,103**

Voluntary returns to Mali facilitated since January 2016

**11,715**

Malian households in Mbera camp (as of 1 May 2016)

**5,434**

Malian refugees with specific needs (as of 30 April 2016)

**30 Litres**

Of potable water available per person per day in Mbera camp

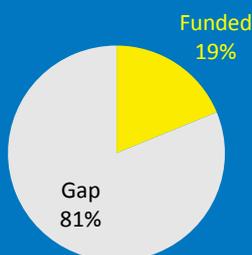
**22**

Persons per latrine in Mbera camp

#### FUNDING 2016

**USD 19M**

Requested for the operation



#### PRIORITIES

- Maintain protection and assistance for all Malian refugees in Mbera camp.
- Strengthen support to refugees' self-reliance.
- Maintain peaceful coexistence between the refugees and host communities.

# UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

## Operational Context

Violent clashes in northern Mali in early 2012 triggered significant displacement of Malians into Mauritania resulting in the establishment of a refugee camp 50 Km from the Malian border in the Hodh el Charghi region. Following a military intervention in northern Mali in January 2013, a new influx of Malian refugees occurred further stretching the limited resources available in the area.

UNHCR leads the humanitarian response for **41,113 Malian refugees in Mbera camp**, in collaboration with the Mauritanian Government, that has kept its borders open to refugee arrivals, as well as with UN organizations and national and international NGOs. In addition, UNHCR protects and assists **1,287 urban refugees and 585 asylum seekers**, mainly from the **Central African Republic, Syria and Côte d'Ivoire**.

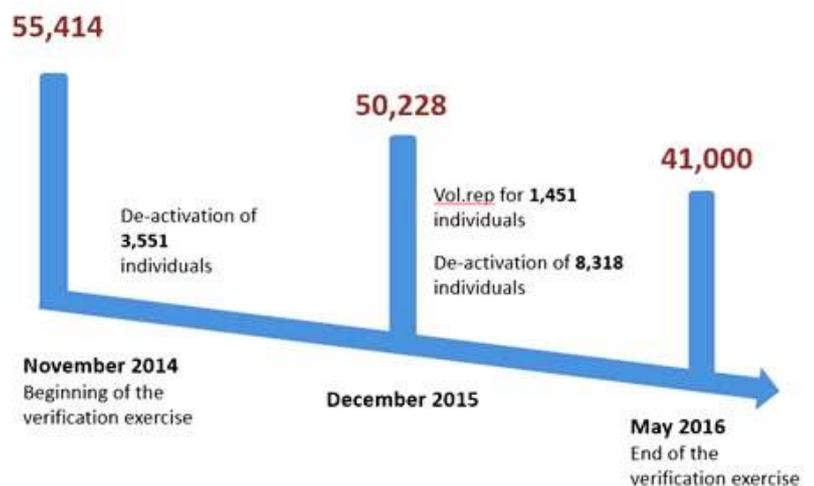
Despite signing a peace agreement in Mali in June 2015 and the voluntary return of more than 1,400 refugees from Mbera camp between December and April 2016 (including some 1,100 between January and April), the security conditions in northern Mali remain unstable as shown by recent new arrivals from Mali to Mauritania. 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 at Mbera Camp.

## Achievements



### Achievements and Impact

- In April 2016, UNHCR in collaboration with the Mauritanian *Agence Nationale du Registre de Population et Titres Sécurisés* (ANRPTS) completed **de-activation** of **8,318** individuals who were confirmed Mauritanian nationals during the **verification exercise** conducted which took place 2014/2015. Most of these Mauritanian families have been assisted to reintegrate in their places of origin, namely the border town of Fassala and the Bassikounou area.



Verification process from November 2014 to April 2016. Source: UNHCR

- All de-activated Mauritanian families received a “de-activation package” composed of food and non-food items as well as cash in order to help them reintegrate in their village of origin. They will **continue to have access to essential services in the camp**, other than food assistance, such as water and health services.
- On 22 April, a group of eight families of Fula ethnicity comprising about **30 people**, mostly **children**, reached the border towns of Fassala and Medala, in western Mauritania . The families sought refuge in Mauritania after been

displaced by recent ethnic clashes in the areas of Tenekou and Nyono, northern Mali. They received initial assistance from MSF Belgium and were registered by UNHCR.

- UNHCR with its partner INTERSOS continue **to address sexual and gender-based violence** and provide **special assistance to people with specific needs** in Mbera camp. About **78 survivors of sexual and gender-based violence** were assisted through follow-up home visits in April 2016. Among them, **15 new cases** have been identified and addressed in 2016 with **psycho-social counselling and support**. In April 2016, **some 590 people with specific needs**, particularly people living with a **physical disability, received tailored assistance** such as psychological support, cash and home delivery of food and non-food items; another **1,773** were reached through **coaching, transport** during general food distribution and **home visits**.

## Durable Solutions

### Achievements and Impact

- Since December 2015, UNHCR has observed an increased interest in voluntary repatriation among Malian refugees. Between March and April 2016, UNHCR facilitated the **voluntary return of 265 Malians**, some of whom have lived in Mbera camp since 2012. Returnees received transport assistance to reach Mali in safety and with dignity. UNHCR Offices in Mauritania and Mali work together to ensure appropriate return conditions and the reintegration of returnees in their country of origin.



UNHCR assists a group of four Malian families with repatriation documents. ©UNHCR/Helena Pes 2016

## Education

### Achievements and Impact

- Primary education plays a key role in UNHCR's self-reliance building strategy in Mbera camp. Since the onset of the refugee crisis in 2012, supporting refugee children's access to education emerged as a priority to avoid a **"lost generation"**. Thanks to this programme many families who did not have access to education in their countries of origin, are now able to send their children to school and enjoy access to learning opportunities for adults.
- Following various initiatives to promote education since 2014, such as establishment of canteens in primary schools and child-friendly centres, the competitive recruitment of **112 teachers** (including directors), the increase in teachers' indemnities and awareness-raising campaigns for parents and children, the number of children enrolled in the six primary school of the camp increased from 3,716 children as of mid-2015 to **4,696** as of 30 April 2016. From 1 to 30 April 2016, **53,473** meals were distributed to children at school and child-friendly centres in collaboration with WFP and the *Commissariat à la sécurité alimentaire* (Commissioner for Food Security).
- In April 2016, about 36 primary school teachers participated in a training about "Prevention of violence at school" and the "Teachers' Code of Conduct".
- In April 2016, about 400 lamps were distributed in the camp thanks to a kind donation from the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) to encourage children to study while enabling them to read at night. The distribution targeted children, victims of early marriages or child abuse and school clubs.

## Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Every year, students in their last year of high school are invited to take the Malian Baccalaureate test. In 2015, for instance, 30 of them passed the test. There is however no scholarship programme allowing Mbera students to pursue their studies at the moment. This issue remains among the main gaps for the education sector.



## Health

### Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR continues to ensure **medical evacuation** for secondary and tertiary medical cases that cannot be treated in the area. Evacuations are available for both refugees and the host population in Mbera camp surroundings. In April 2016, **38 patients** were evacuated.

## Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The provision of mobile X-ray machine would considerably improve capacity to respond to trauma on the spot, hence reducing trauma-related medical evacuations.



## Food Security and Nutrition

### Achievements and Impact

- During the **monthly general food distribution** in Mbera camp, all refugees received a reduced food ration composed of rice, pulses, salt and oil. Due to financial gaps, this ration covers 79% of the standard 2,100 Kcl per person/per day. The distribution was organized by UNHCR through its partner *Commissariat à la Sécurité Alimentaire* and in collaboration with WFP which procures and transports the food rations.

## Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Due to financial gaps, a reduced food ration was distributed. UNHCR works with WFP to identify durable nutritional solutions for refugees. The introduction of a cash component to the monthly food distribution is under assessment.



## Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

### Achievements and Impact

- In Mbera 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 at **580 water taps** and **177 community water points** located in all sections of the camp. It is estimated that 80% of water is consumed for domestic purposes, while 20% is used for gardening, livestock and other livelihood purposes.
- In order to improve regular maintenance and functioning of the existing water system, UNHCR installed **new generators** at two boreholes. This installation will enable the



Water point in Mbera camp. © UNHCR/Helena Pes 2016

population to face the coming heat with a more regular provision of water, which is fundamental within the current seasonal change.

- In order to improve sanitation in Mbera camp, UNHCR carries out a **solid waste management programme** through its partner SOS Desert. Within this programme, solid waste is separated from organic waste. Manure from livestock activities is regularly collected and converted for gardening use. In April, the programme cleaned 186 roads, 52 livestock fields, 17 public spaces and 10 animal water points. In addition, there are four areas of solid waste management (sorting, incineration and/or landfill).

#### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- It is estimated that about 74% of the camps latrines will need to be replaced by the end of 2016. The current ECHO-funded programme will only cover 9% of such needs. More funds are needed to ensure proper sanitation in the camp and prevent the outbreak of water borne diseases.

## Shelter and Non Food Items

#### Achievements and Impact

- As a compensatory measure within the de-activation process which ended in April, more than 8,000 individuals who were to be de-activated, received basic assets such as cups, buckets and sanitary kits for women of child-bearing age.

#### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Given the harsh climatic conditions in the area and the fact that shelters distributed since 2013 have a two year life-span, it is estimated that some **70% of the shelters in Mbera camp** need to be replaced in 2016. A shelter distribution plan for 2016 has been finalized to give priority to 5,000 among most needy households. Yet some extra materials are needed in order to complete the existing stock, which was damaged by extreme weather conditions.

## Self-Reliance

#### Achievements and Impact



Income generating activities support handicrafts in Mbera camp  
© UNHCR/Helena Pes 2016

- Strengthening refugees' self-reliance in Mbera camp is a priority for UNHCR to gradually reduce their dependency on humanitarian assistance. While the Office continues to follow up on **195** income-generation activities projects through **Action contre la Faim-Espagne**, and funded in 2014-2015, **100 new income-generating activities** will be selected in 2016. These projects should benefit some 460 households (1,800 individuals).

- Refugees among the most vulnerable in the camp continue to have **access to gardening** fields set up by UNHCR through SOS Desert. Currently, **1,800 women** have access to these fields where they produce fruits and vegetable mostly for direct consumption but also for sale (about 20% of the production). In April, a **training on agricultural**

**technics** was held for all gardeners in the camp, to train them on water saving practices and the benefits of heat resistant plants. The camp's population is currently preparing to face the incoming hot season, when a critical

reduction of harvest is expected due to the extreme rise in temperatures. A total of **7,183 kg of mixed vegetables** was harvested from local agricultural production in the camp this month.

- Strengthening sustainable livelihoods is part of UNHCR's self-reliance programme in support of **veterinary activities** for livestock in the camp. In April, **more than 1,800 livestock units** have been reached by a **vaccination campaign** supported by UNHCR through its partner SOS Desert.



## Peaceful co-existence

### Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR pays a particular attention to the integration of Mbera camp within the host community. As a response to the increased pressure from livestock on the pastures around Mbera camp, UNHCR facilitated the strengthening of a **mixed environmental committee** composed of refugees as well as Mauritians. The committee plays a crucial role in creating consensus among different communities to share and agree on common resources management. In April 2016, training courses on environmental protection and heat resistant agricultural practices were extended for host community representatives in Bassikounou and Fassala areas.



Malian and Mauritanian herders meet at a livestock water points to share ideas on common resources management in Mbera camp.

© UNHCR/Helena Pes 2016

- A tree planting campaign was launched in April under the slogan "A refugee for a tree". On 29 April, a training in "recycling" was held for Kleive village committee, involving 44 people. Four sensitization sessions on education and child rights were held in 15 villages of the Bassikounou region.
- To strengthen peaceful coexistence between refugees and their respective host communities in the Bassikounou region, UNHCR continues to carry out five projects aimed at improving life-conditions for the host communities in the villages of Seremassa, Seredouba, Lemghays, Sedra and Bir el Barka, located in the surroundings of the camp. The interventions mostly consist of **income-generating activities, livelihood and water** improvements.
- In order to **sensitize** different communities on the importance of **peaceful coexistence**, **two amicable football matches** were held among a team composed of Malians and one representing the host community. About 460 people attended the event.



## Camp Coordination and Camp Management

### Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR through its partner the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) continues to ensure the management of public facilities, shelters and waste collection in the camp. Four outreach posts (one in each zone) allow LWF to collect complaints and feedback from refugees related to the maintenance of shelters and infrastructures. Outreach posts are also key spots to conduct awareness-raising campaigns on various matters.

## 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.

UNHCR 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 in 2016 amount to **US\$ 3.6 million** received from the **Government of Japan** and **ECHO**. **US\$ 15.5 million** is still requested for UNHCR's operation in Mauritania.

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 in 2016.

### Major donors of unrestricted and regional funds to UNHCR in 2016 (in USD):

Sweden (78 M) | United States of America (78M) | Netherlands (46 M) | Norway (40 M) | Australia (31 M) | Denmark (24 M) | Canada (16 M) | Switzerland (15 M) | Germany (13 M) | Private Donors Spain (12M)

### Other donors of unrestricted and regional funds to UNHCR in 2016:

Algeria | Argentina | Austria | Belgium | Costa Rica | Estonia | Finland | Holy See | Iceland | India | Indonesia | Kuwait | Liechtenstein | Luxembourg | Monaco | Mozambique | New Zealand | Portugal | Qatar | Republic of Korea | Romania | Russian Federation | Saudi Arabia | Serbia | Singapore | Sri Lanka | Thailand | Turkey | United Arab Emirates | Uruguay | Private Donors

#### Contacts:

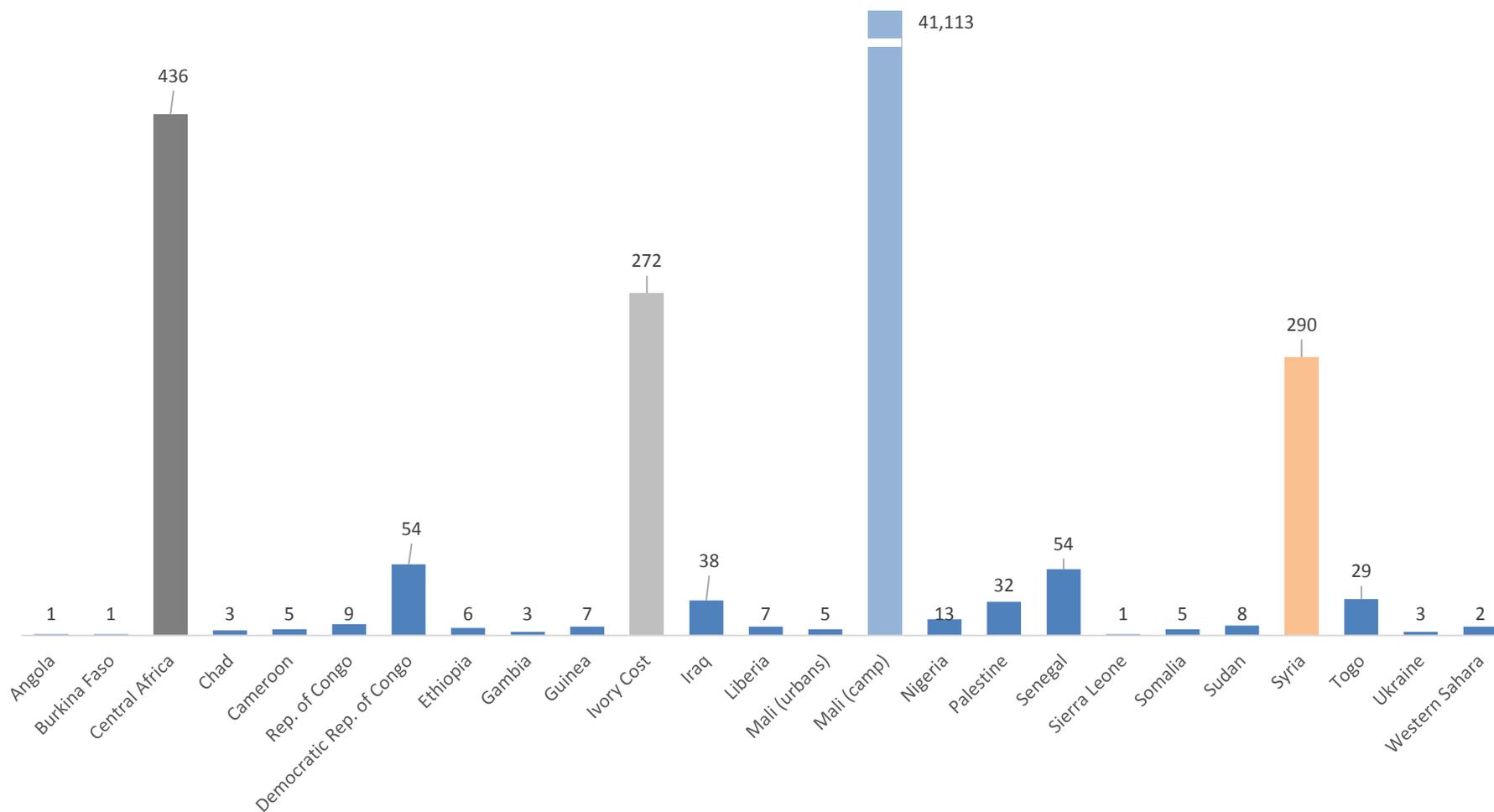
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#### Links:



### Annex 1 – Breakdown of the refugee population in Mauritania per country of origin



## Annex 2– Mbera Camp Who does What and Where ?

