



2017 Dakar: Preparations completed

- **Hirvonen, Al-Rajhi and Menzies to race the MINI John Cooper Works Rally**
- **Further information on the route of the 2017 Dakar**

There are less than 40 days to go to the start of Dakar Rally in January in South America. On Wednesday, a crucial part of the preparations was completed: all the racing and service vehicles left X-raid's workshop in Trebur for the long haul to Paraguay's capital Asuncion where the Dakar will be started on 02nd January.

The first stop is the French port Le Havre. There, all the cars and trucks will be loaded on a car ferry. This also applies to the three MINI John Cooper Works Rally and the five MINI ALL4 Racing. Compared to last year, the livery of every single vehicle was changed.

Mikko Hirvonen (FIN) / Michel Périn (FRA) race a MINI John Cooper Works Rally decorated by the colour combination chili red/light white, Yazeed Al-Rajhi (KSA) / Timo Gottschalk (GER) race a rebel green/chili red car and the MINI John Cooper Works Rally of the US-American pairing Bryce Menzies / Pete Mortensen features the base colour white silver. Orlando Terranova (ARG) / Andreas Schulz (GER) also are part of the X-raid top team and will contest the legendary event with an enhanced MINI ALL4 Racing in the colours light white/chili red. Furthermore, all the other pairings also have new liveries for their cars.

For the drivers and navigators, however, the press conference held by the Dakar organisation on Wednesday in Paris was far more interesting as further information around the route of the 2017 Dakar was published there. The distance of seven special stages will exceed 400 kilometres, with one of them even being longer than 500 kilometres. Furthermore, the competitors will have to spend six days in an

www.x-raid.de



PRESS RELEASE

altitude of more than 3000 metres above sea level, including the rest day in Bolivia's capital La Paz.

Right after the rest day, the pairings will have to cope with a marathon stage (La Paz – Uyuni – Salta). At Uyuni, they will have to do without their service crews but other than in 2016 when the cars had to be parked in the Parc Fermé right away, the drivers will be allowed to work on their cars, in the coming Dakar edition. Nonetheless, they should opt for a conservative approach on these two days as executing major repairs will prove to be difficult.

In addition, the navigation has been made more complicated. For instance by the introduction of the WPC that will replace – to a large extent – the WPM. If a crew entered an 800-metre radius around a way point, an arrow showed them the way to the centre, with the WPM. In the case of the WPC, this radius virtually is history. Now, the way point is regarded as reached when the respective crew enters a 300-metre radius and in addition, the arrow showing the way to the centre also has disappeared. So, no competitor can be really sure about the starting point for the following navigation.

“That’s making our task really difficult,” underlines Michel Périn. “After all, having reached the 300-metre radius doesn’t mean that you are on the way to crossing it. You also could have only ‘touched’ the 300-metre radius and passed it instead. Furthermore, finding a way point with a smaller radius always is more difficult. A situation that can turn out to become crucial in the battle for the win. “

“This Wednesday was an interesting and important day,” said X-raid Team Manager Sven Quandt. Both the service and the racing cars will have to cover massive distances and the five days in the heights of Bolivia will represent a true challenge for all those involved. Peugeot and Toyota will be tough competitors but with the days in the Bolivian heights and the additional challenges for the navigators, another two significant factors have been added to the battle for the win. Our Dakar preparations are nearly completed. Now, the three MINI John Cooper Works Rally racers and the five MINI ALL4 Racing cars as well as the service vehicles are on their way to South America where we will see them again only in late December.”

WhatsApp broadcast list

For the journalists, X-raid offers an additional media service via WhatsApp. This service is supposed to inform them during the Dakar as extensively and promptly as possible.

To be able to do so we are creating a broadcast list. Other than in a WhatsApp group, the members of such a list aren't visible for one another and only can communicate with the administrators.

To register for the list please save the following number to then send a WhatsApp message to it with your name and the communication medium you are working for.

Stefanie Szlapka: 0049-172 548 0 549

To be able to complete your registration, we also have to save your mobile-phone number