



Media Information
2017 Dakar Rally
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2017 Dakar Rally gets under way with 454 km Stage 1: Asunción - Resistencia

- Two MINI John Cooper Works Rally take top ten positions
- Al-Rajhi completes Stage 1 in seventh place; Hirvonen in ninth
- All eight members of the MINI Family complete Stage 1

Munich. The 2017 Dakar Rally (2-14th January) finally got underway with Stage 1, Asunción, the capital city of Paraguay, to Resistencia, Argentina. The 454 km route included a 39 km Special Stage that sets the starting order for tomorrow's (03-01-2017) Stage 2.

Following an evening of pre-race celebrations that saw thousands of Dakar rally fans line the streets of Asunción before dancing the night away, the official race start to the 39th edition of Dakar has finally arrived. Eight crews make up the MINI Family for this year's Dakar and all eight got away from the start line to begin what is likely to be the toughest Dakar for some years.

All eight crews of the MINI Family successfully started and completed Stage 1. The resulting finish order was always going to produce extremely close racing with everyone pushing hard to get good a result. This indeed proved to be the case.

X-raid Team's Yazeed Al-Rajhi (KSA) and co-driver Timo Gottschalk (GER) – in the new MINI John Cooper Works Rally #306 – finished seventh and the highest placed member of the MINI Family.

Al-Rajhi: "At this stage all is ok. We try to do our best and not make any mistakes. The stage was very rough, not easy, difficult and hard for the car also. But we finish with no problem."

Just 14 seconds separated Al-Rajhi from fellow X-raid Team duo of Mikko Hirvonen (FIN) and Michel Périn (FRA) in the second of the three new MINI John Cooper Works Rally cars to debut at the 2017 Dakar Rally. Hirvonen's experience from his first Dakar last year stood him in good stead because he finished also inside the top ten in ninth position.



Talking about his first race in the MINI John Cooper Works Rally, Hirvonen said: “The first day is now behind us. Now we can start the proper racing tomorrow. No dramas today, really. I’m quite happy with how today went and how the car is working. The stage was pretty fast; one or two surprising bumps and holes here and there but otherwise all is ok.”

Despite little testing time in the seat of a MINI John Cooper Works Rally (#308), Orlando Terranova (ARG) and co-driver Andreas Schulz (GER), also of X-raid Team, showed true competitive spirit by taking 11th place – only four seconds behind Hirvonen.

“It was nice,” said Terranova. “The car is perfect and fantastic for Dakar. We don’t make notes; we drive like cross-country. The race is on and we took a little risk – we wanted to be in the top ten to have a good start. It was difficult without notes because the pace was very fast.”

Jakub Przygonski (POL) and Tom Colsoul (BEL) was the first of the MINI Family to complete Stage 1 at the controls of an iconic MINI ALL4 Racing (#316). The ORLEN Team duo finished in the top fifteen with a solid 14th place.

The remainder of the X-raid Team crews also made it to the end of Stage 1 ready to begin their attack and chip away at the leading positions over the course of the next 12 days.

Three more MINI ALL4 Racing of X-raid Team finished in the early top 30. Last minute entries to Dakar, Sylvio deBarros (BR) and Rafael Capoani (BR) completed in 21st place in their MINI ALL4 Racing (#339). Following up in close formation were the MINI Family crews of Boris Garafulic (CHL) / Filipe Palmeiro (POR) and Mohamed Abu Issa (QAT) / Xavier Panseri (FRA) in 22nd and 23rd respectively. Stephan Schott (GER) and Paulo Fiuza (POR) ended Stage 1 in 31st place, just 5min 18 secs behind the leading car!

Tomorrow’s (03-01-2017) Stage 2 starts in Resistencia, Argentina and completes in San Miguel de Tucumán, a total distance of 803 km.

2017 Dakar Rally: Stage 1, Asunción - Resistencia, 454 km. MINI Family standings.

Position	Driver	Co-driver	#	Team	Time
7	Yazeed Al-Rajhi (KSA)	Timo Gottschalk (GER)	306	X-raid Team	00:26:47 +00:01:06
9	Mikko Hirvonen (FIN)	Michel Périn (FRA)	303	X-raid Team	00:27:01 +00:01:20
11	Orlando Terranova (ARG)	Andreas Schulz (GER)	308	X-raid Team	00:27:05 +00:01:24
14	Jakub Przygonski (POL)	Tom Colsoul (BEL)	316	ORLEN Team	00:27:28 +00:01:47
21	Sylvio de Barros (BR)	Rafael Capoani (IT)	339	X-raid Team	00:28:48 +00:03:07
22	Boris Garafulic (CHL)	Filipe Palmeiro (POR)	314	X-raid Team	00:28:59 +00:03:18
23	Mohamed Abu Issa (QAT)	Xavier Panseri (FRA)	322	X-raid Team	00:29:02 +00:03:21
31	Stephan Schott (GER)	Paulo Fiuza (POR)	325	X-raid Team	00:30:59 00:05:18

Media Contact.

MINI Motorsport Communications

Danilo Coglianese

Telephone: +49 (0)176 – 601 72405

Email: danilo.coglianese@bmwgroup.com

Media Website.

www.press.bmwgroup.com/global

MINI Motorsport on the web.

Facebook: www.facebook.com/bmwgroupsports