

Press release

06 January 2016

## **2016 Dakar Rally – Day Four, Stage 3: Two MINI ALL4 Racing in the top five. Hirvonen and Al-Attiyah reel in the leading pack to place MINI fourth and fifth overall.**

Poor driving conditions force reduced racing distance but fails to slow MINI ALL4 Racing crews – hard-charging Terranova and Roma pick up valuable places.

**Munich.** Day Four (Stage 3) ended with a cool and collected Mikko Hirvonen (FIN) finishing the stage in sixth to put his AXION X-raid Team MINI ALL4 Racing (#315) in fourth position overall – one position up from yesterday's fifth place.

Hirvonen and co-driver Michel Périn (FRA) pushed hard from the start with Hirvonen putting on a perfect display of controlled driving reminiscent of his WRC days. If the Finnish driver had considered the possibility of a dream start to his first Dakar then his result to date must surely reflect that dream. Currently he lies just 5:52m behind leader Loeb.

"It was raining quite heavily in a few places, but again we got through with no mistakes," said Hirvonen. "At this point of the race and this the first year I'm thinking I will not take too many risks. We've been lucky with the conditions; it hasn't been so hot and the distances haven't been so long. So far everything has been good."

Poor driving conditions meant the Special Stage was reduced to a distance of just 190km. It also forced an early end to the Trucks category when part of its route collapsed with no alternative way through.

Despite nature's challenges, the 2015 Dakar-winning duo of Nasser Al-Attiyah (QAT) and co-pilot Mathieu Baumel (FRA) set about challenging the front runners and finished Stage 3 in third. This result now sees the AXION X-raid Team crew (#300) in fifth place on the road.

"It was a good stage," said a smiling Al-Attiyah. "We tried to push in some places but at the beginning it was a lot of rain, which was not too good for us. At the last part it was rain again and we lost a little time. I'm quite happy – tomorrow we start in a good position. Tomorrow will also be the key of Dakar with Marathon day; it is two days without service. The MINI ALL4 Racing is strong and we will push more."  
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Fellow AXION X-raid Team crews of Argentinean pairing Orlando Terranova / Bernardo 'Ronnie' Graue (#310) and Spanish duo Joan 'Nani' Roma / Alex Haro

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(#304) have the toughest job of all the MINI ALL4 Racing crews by having to play a difficult game of catch up. Both cars were victims of deep mud during Stage 2 and lost many positions trying to get free.

Stage 3 saw both crews produce their very best driving and navigation skills to claw back quite a few positions and battle their way through the middle order traffic. Terranova is now 23<sup>rd</sup> overall and Roma is up to 30<sup>th</sup>. While the two crews have a bigger battle ahead to make up even more positions and reduce the time variations, we shouldn't forget the Dakar Rally is the longest and harshest motorsport endurance race on the planet and there are many more days to go...

Joan 'Nani' Roma: "When we started Stage 3 we got the rain and when driving flat out it is scary; you can't see very well and the grip is not so good. We came across other cars that were awkward to pass in the conditions. I'm happy with my driving today. Really happy. Maybe the timing is not so good after yesterday's problem but when I analyse the timing from today it is good. The strategy for the next two days is to push and push."

Meanwhile, seven MINI ALL4 Racing cars are currently within the top 20. In 14<sup>th</sup> is the pairing of Jakub 'Kuba' Przygonski (POL) and Andrei Rudnitski (BLR) of ORLEN Team (#327). This crew is closely shadowed by the remainder of the privateer MINI ALL4 Racing crews.

Stage 2 was also not a memorable day for the German duo of Stephan Schott / Holm Schmidt (X-Raid team #331). An incident with a rock meant their MINI ALL4 Racing was damaged beyond repair leading to a non-start of Stage 3 and withdrawal from the 2016 Dakar. Both crew members will remain at Dakar to support the MINI ALL4 Racing family.

Day Five (Stage 4) of the 2016 Dakar will see the competitors race on sand and rocky tracks at an average height of 3,500mts. This stage will also feature a Marathon section where the competitors become their own mechanics and must complete their own servicing needs.

**2016 Dakar Rally: Day Four, Stage 3, Termas Rio Hondo – San Salvador de Juyjuy, 190km (reduced distance). MINI ALL 4 Racing standings:**

Position	Driver	Co-driver	#	Team	Time
4	Mikko Hirvonen (FIN)	Michel Périn (FRA)	315	AXION X-raid Team	006:07:34 + 00:05:52
5	Nasser Al-Attiyah (QAT)	Mathieu Baumel (FRA)	300	AXION X-raid Team	006:08:21 +00:06:39
14	Jakub 'Kuba' Przygonski	Andrei Rudnitski	327	ORLEN Team	006:26:36 +00:24:54

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	(POL)	(BLR)			
15	Harry Hunt (GB)	Andreas Schulz (GER)	323	X-raid Team	006:28:06 +00:26:24
16	Adam Malysz (POL)	Xavier Panseri (FRA)	325	ORLEN Team	006:28:46 +00:27:04
18	Erik van Loon (NDL)	Wouter Rosegaar (NDL)	306	Van Loon Racing	006:31:19 +00:29:37
20	Nazareno Lopez (ARG)	Sergio Lafuente (URU)	351	X-raid Team	006:33:17 +00:31:35
22	Boris Garafulic (CHL)	Filipe Palmeiro (POR)	313	X-raid Team	006:36:14 +00:34:32
23	Orlando Terranova (ARG)	Bernardo “Ronnie” Graue (ARG)	310	AXION X-raid Team	006:37:42 +00:36:00
30	Joan ‘Nani’ Roma (ESP)	Alex Haro (ESP)	304	AXION X-raid Team	006:56:05 +00:54:23

Find more photos and videos in high resolution of previous Dakar participants in the MINI ALL4 Racing on the BMW Media Website by [clicking here](#)

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