

Press Release  
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## **MINI and X-raid announce Mikko Hirvonen to pilot MINI ALL4 Racing to challenge for Dakar Rally 2016 / MINI ALL4 Racing is named as weapon of choice for WRC ace Mikko Hirvonen**

Munich (DE). MINI and X-raid are pleased to announce Mikko Hirvonen (FI), former WRC specialist and hero to WRC fans world-wide, is to compete for the Dakar Rally 2016 title in a MINI ALL4 Racing. Hirvonen's time leading up to this prestigious event (3-13 January 2016) will be spent getting acquainted with his MINI ALL4 Racing in racing conditions by competing in selected rounds of the 2015 FIA Cross Country Rally World Cup, starting with Spain's Baja Aragón, 24-26 July 2015.

Mikko Hirvonen, 34, is an accomplished rally driver from Finland with four second-placed finishes (2008, 2009, 2011, and 2012) to his name in the fast-paced World Rally Championship. His list of early age accomplishments at rallying quickly earned him the right to be tagged as "Flying Finn", an accolade used to describe the efforts of fellow Finns in various sporting arenas.

Hirvonen will be joined at the flight deck of his MINI ALL4 Racing by experienced co-driver Michel Périn (FR). Périn is a four-time Dakar winner and celebrated his last Dakar Rally win in 2014 when he partnered Nani Roma in a MINI ALL4 Racing. MINI and the MINI ALL4 Racing has now won the Dakar Rally an enviable four times, the latest and consecutive win came in January this year.

Followers of the FIA Cross Country Rally World Cup will be surprised to see Périn back in the thick of rally action after the Frenchman retired from the sport earlier this year. Hirvonen also retired from WRC in 2014, but the lure of competing in the Dakar Rally – the greatest rally endurance event – and the FIA Cross Country Rally World Cup at the controls of a MINI ALL4 racing was enough to tempt Hirvonen to test drive a MINI ALL4 Racing. This new dynamic duo of Mikko Hirvonen and Michel Périn came to be when the pair teamed up for the test sessions in Morocco earlier this year and immediately hit it off.

Talking about his leap onto the stage of the FIA Cross Country Rally World Cup, Hirvonen said: "Dakar is such a long race and the dunes there are in a world of their own. So, to finish the event without encountering major issues or without getting stuck anywhere already would represent a really good achievement for my first Dakar.

"Meanwhile, the Baja Aragón is going to be more of the kind of

rallying I'm used to. But driving without pace notes in your road book is not so easy and I still have to familiarise myself with the MINI ALL4 Racing as well. But should I feel good in the car and everything works well we hopefully will be able to set some good times in Baja Aragon."

## **Race calendar: 2015 FIA World Cup for Cross Country Rallies.**

20/02 – 22/02 Baja Russia  
27/03 – 2/04 Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge  
18/04 – 24/04 Seeline Cross-Country Rally Qatar  
10/05 – 17/05 Pharaons Rally  
25/06 – 28/06 Italian Baja  
24/07 – 26/07 Baja Aragón  
13/08 – 16/08 Hungarian Baja  
27/08 – 30/08 Baja Poland  
03/10 – 09/10 Rallye du Maroc  
22/10 – 24/10 Baja Portalegre 500

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

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