

# Mauritania

15 November 2018

Mauritania hosts over **2,000 urban refugees and asylum-seekers** and more than **57,000 Malian refugees** in and around Mbera camp established in 2012 in the arid south-eastern region close to the Malian border.

Despite the conclusion of a peace agreement in 2015, **large-scale returns of Malian refugees are not expected** due to persistent violence in northern Mali. In October alone, **105 new arrivals** were registered in Mbera camp.

In the context of this protracted situation, UNHCR is engaging with the **humanitarian-development nexus** to move away from the traditional care and maintenance approach.

## KEY INDICATORS

**5,664**

New arrivals from Mali since January 2018

**No**

Voluntary returns to Mali facilitated in 2018

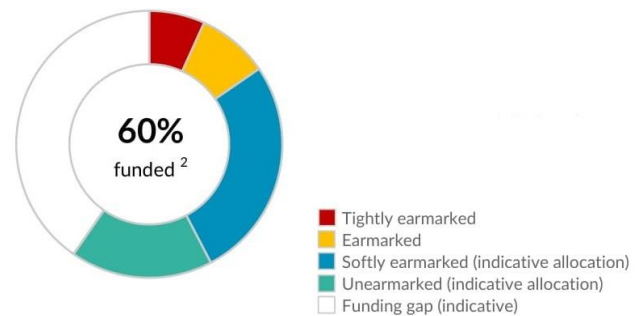
**4,910**

Malian refugees with **specific needs** (as of 31 October 2018)

## FUNDING (AS OF 15 NOVEMBER)

**USD 20.1 M**

**11.9 M** received. **8.2 M** requested for the UNHCR operation in Mauritania



Aerial view from Mbera camp © UNHCR/Sam Jefferies

## POPULATION OF CONCERN

Malian refugees in Mbera camp **57,693**

Urban refugees and asylum-seekers **2,477**

A total of **60,170** people are assisted by UNHCR in Mauritania.

## Operational Context

In Mauritania, UNHCR provides protection and assistance to **57,693 Malian refugees** in and around **Mbera camp** in south-eastern Mauritania and to **1,400 refugees and 1,077 asylum-seekers in the urban areas** of Nouakchott and Nouadhibou (mainly from the Central African Republic, Syria and Côte d'Ivoire), in a context of mixed movements.

UNHCR works closely with the Mauritanian authorities towards the **development and implementation of a national asylum system**. Pending the adoption of the asylum law, UNHCR supports the authorities to enhance refugee protection in Mauritania improving access to documentation, birth registration, economic opportunities, and basic services such as health and education.

Since 2012, UNHCR has led the **humanitarian response for Malian refugees** in the Hodh Echarghi region, in collaboration with the Mauritanian Government and other UN agencies, national and international NGOs. Mauritania continues to keep its borders open to new influxes. Despite the conclusion of a peace agreement in Mali in June 2015, large-scale returns of refugees are not yet expected due to the prevailing security situation in northern Mali. In June 2016, Mauritania, Mali and UNHCR concluded a Tripartite Agreement for the voluntary repatriation of Malian refugees. This agreement provides a framework to facilitate voluntary return, when the conditions in Mali allow. In the meantime, it reaffirms the commitment of Mauritania and Mali to protect refugees. At present, UNHCR considers that the conditions in Mali are not conducive to promote the return of refugees. However, UNHCR may facilitate voluntary return upon request and on an individual case basis.

## Achievements



### PROTECTION

#### Achievements and Impact

Refugees and asylum-seekers continue to seek safety in Mbera camp with **105 newly registered** in the month of October alone. In urban areas, UNHCR registered **72 new arrivals**.

In urban areas, UNHCR provided **96 refugees with specific needs** with cash assistance.

UNHCR held a meeting with the National Agency for Civil Registration (ANRPTS) to discuss **documentation issues** faced by refugees in urban areas and access to **civil registration for refugee children born in Mauritania**.

In October, UNHCR and WFP presented the results of the **socio-economic profiling** conducted in Mbera camp in late 2017 carried out by ACF. This study was conducted **with financial support from the European Union** (EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa). Among the main outcomes, the study showed that more than **41% of households in Mbera camp are extremely poor** and **60% of households do not send their children to school**. The study was conducted under Household Economic Approach (HEA) methodology, however UNHCR and WFP came to the conclusion that HEA methodology could not be used as the basis for definitive analysis for household profiling and targeting of assistance in 2019 and beyond. Currently, **the two UN Agencies are reviewing the results of the study** complementing the analysis with the so-called "refined" *Consolidated Approach to Reporting Indicators of Food Security (CARI)* approach, which **combines several indicators to determine the level of household vulnerability, and UNHCR vulnerability approach**.



*An Ivorian refugee woman sits outside her shelter in Nouakchott outskirts.  
©UNHCR/Viola E. Bruttomesso*

## Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

UNHCR continues its advocacy for refugees' access to civil registration and national documentation. UNHCR also advocates for the inclusion of refugees in national protection systems (health, education, child protection, SGBV) and the establishment of referral mechanisms.



### EDUCATION

#### Achievements and Impact

On 1 October, students in Mbera camp went back to school like all other students in Mauritania. On 4 October, UNHCR and its partners organized **the launch event of the back-to-school campaign "All united for the education of all children"**. Outreach activities continued during the month of October and raised the level of school registration to unprecedented levels. **The number of students enrolled reached 4,601** including **2,342 boys** and **2,259 girls**. Among them, **1,151 students are new students** (598 boys and 553 girls).

By end October, **293 refugee children** had registered at **primary level** and **201 at secondary level** in the urban centres of Nouakchott and Nouadhibou.

In October, **UNHCR also selected 17 qualified Malian refugees for DAFI tertiary education scholarships** for the academic year 2018-2019. In urban areas, UNCHR also supports **19 refugees** enrolled in tertiary education.



One of the outreach activities of the back-to-school campaign aimed at sensitize Koranic masters and their students ©UNHCR/Kadijetou Welle



### HEALTH

#### Achievements and Impact

In October, UNHCR facilitated the evacuation of **25 patients with secondary and tertiary health care needs to facilities** with higher treatment plateaus. **Twelve refugees were provided cash support to cover medical needs**. UNHCR also continued to step up its support to the delivery of health care at Mbera camp to make up for the departure of MSF.

In addition, **372 urban refugees received health care assistance** including check-ups, medical visits and surgeries. As a partnership with a psychologist still needs to be determined, **refugees in urban areas are referred to the psychiatric unit at the Hopital des Spécialités Médicales** in Nouakchott where they receive free psycho-social support.



A mother and son wait for the pharmacist at LWF – UNHCR health post ©UNHCR/Viola E. Bruttomesso

## Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

Following the announcement of the departure of the main health actor in Mbera camp, *Médecins sans Frontières* (MSF), UNHCR has engaged in advocacy efforts with the Ministry of Health, Unicef and WHO as well as donors to ensure the provision of basic health services is maintained in Mbera camp from January 2019. As part of these efforts, the Mauritanian Government has expressed its commitment to expand its role in the health sector in the area. Mauritania will need both financial and technical support to take over these activities.



## FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

### Achievements and Impact

In October, UNHCR in partnership with the World Food Programme (WFP) distributed **food** and **cash** (100 MRU per person per month) with electronic cards **to 51,791 refugees** (12,667 families). During the food and cash distribution, in collaboration with its partners WFP, LWF, *Action contre la Faim* and CSA, UNHCR assisted and accompanied **1,106 Persons with Specific Needs**. The **introduction of the Global Distribution Tool (GDT)** has enabled UNHCR to enhance its distribution tracking and verification processes, and the protection of children who are sent to collect the food ration on behalf of their families.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

Refugees in Mbera camp are dependent on food assistance due to very scarce local resources. From October to December 2018, WFP faces a US\$ 2.7 million shortfall (63% of the 3-month requirements) for its assistance to Malian refugees. UNHCR works with partners to improve access to gardening fields and livestock to reduce refugees' dependency on food assistance. Development interventions are needed in the Hodh Echargui region to help both refugee and host communities become more resilient.



## WATER AND SANITATION

### Achievements and Impact

UNHCR and its partner *Action contre la Faim* (ACF) ensure that all refugees in the camp have access to clean water and sanitation facilities, including latrines.

In Mbera camp, the hygiene sensitizations activities continued and focused on awareness raising techniques with **1,083 sessions organized by the focal points**. In total, 3,265 men, 3,056 women, 3,144 girls, 2,395 boys participated in different sessions.

During the month of October, UNHCR continued with routine monitoring and network management activities **to make the water system in Mbera camp more efficient**. These maintenance works included the change of 42 taps in all areas, the repair of 14 taps, the replace of 14 valve to reduce water loss, the clogging of 9 leaks, and the maintenance of meters. In addition to this, **UNHCR continues with the construction of the new 300m<sup>3</sup> water tower**.



*A children in front of one of the 2,193 latrines in Mbera camp  
©UNHCR/Viola E. Bruttomesso*

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

Water supply in Mbera camp is still highly dependent on humanitarian assistance. UNHCR has contributed to an initial investment into the water infrastructure of the camp but more funds are needed to ensure a smooth transition from emergency to more durable and sustainable water systems in Mbera camp and its surroundings. These investments are crucial given the current risks of drought in the region.



**SHELTER AND NFIS****Achievements and Impact**

In October, UNHCR distributed NFIs in Mbera camp including **114,732 soaps, 20,226 blankets, 18,006 mosquito nets, 15,082 jerry cans and 8,954 plastic seals with lid**. This is in addition to 8 plastic buckets of 15 L with lid, 13 kitchen kits and 55 sunlamps distributed to vulnerable families. The LWF's counselling center also distributed **blankets to 103 babies and 25 persons with specific needs, while 68 women received hygienic kits**.

**PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE AND SELF RELIANCE****Achievements and Impact**

At the end of October, the International Labor Office (ILO) undertook a mission in Bassikounou in the context of the project aiming at **improving the employability of young people to strengthen refugees and host communities self reliance** with funding the support from the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa. The mission proceeded to the reception of candidate files for **renewable energies, construction, topography and plumbing training** and organized a selection test in collaboration with UNHCR's partners involved in youth promotion, in addition to administrative, municipal and camp leaders. **84 young people from Mbera, 35 young people from Bassikounou and 22 young people from Fassala were selected for the training**.

In October, UNHCR's partner World Vision started the identification of the beneficiaries of livelihood projects in Mbera camp. As a result, **35 incoming-generating activities (IGAs) were initially selected and training was provided for the identified associations and structures**. These activities will be put in place thanks to the support of the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa.

**DURABLE SOLUTIONS****Achievements and Impact**

In urban areas, **UNHCR met with the Sierra Leone community to discuss their situation after the cessation clause in order to see the possibility to resume advocacy with government for their legal status in the country**. Also, in the context of mixed movements and due to the high level of newly registered asylum seekers from Sierra Leone who are not able to establish a claim under the 1951 Convention, the meeting aimed also at explaining the asylum procedure and criteria and alternative pathways to respond to their needs.

**Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps**

There is a considerable number of refugees in need for resettlement in Mauritania. UNHCR continues to identify persons in need of resettlement and conducts advocacy with the support of the Regional Bureau to process cases.



*UNHCR protection staff during the meeting with the Sierra Leone community in Nouakchott  
©UNHCR/Viola E. Bruttomesso*

**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 Interior and Decentralization and local authorities. UNHCR leads and coordinates the Refugee Coordination mechanism at Mbera Camp. UNHCR also participates in the United Nations Country Team and Humanitarian Country Team and works closely with national and international NGOs.

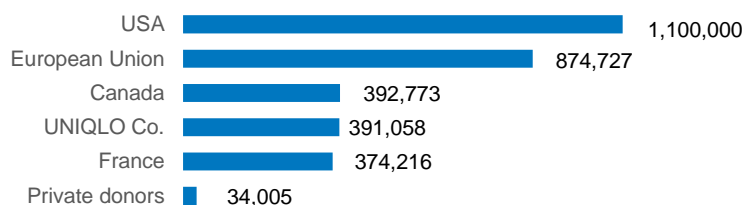
UNHCR, jointly with the Mauritanian Government, representatives of UN agencies and international NGOs signed the 2018-2022 United Nations' Sustainable Development Partnership Framework (CPDD), which integrates humanitarian and development interventions and includes a strategy to strengthen peaceful coexistence and self-reliance for refugees and host communities in Mauritania's border areas.

## Financial Information

UNHCR is grateful for the support provided by donors who have contributed to this operation. UNHCR also express gratitude especially towards those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with un-earmarked and softly earmarked funds.

### EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

Earmarked contributions for the operation amount to some **US\$ 3.1 million**.



### SOFTLY EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

Germany 46.6 million | United States of America 16.4 million | Private donors Australia 11.3 million | Denmark 5.7 million | Private donors Germany 5.2 million | Sweden 4.4 million | Finland 4.3 million | Private donors Republic of Korea 3.6 million | Norway 3.2 million | Private donors Switzerland 3.2 million | Japan 2.8 million | Private donors Sweden 2.8 million | Holy See | Iceland | Liechtenstein | Malta | Romania | Private donors

### UNEARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

Sweden 98.2 million | Private donors Spain 58.7 million | United Kingdom 45.3 million | Norway 42.5 million | Netherlands 39.1 million | Private donors Republic of Korea 28.5 million | Japan 26.5 million | Denmark 25.5 million | Private donors Japan 16.1 million | Switzerland 15.8 million | Private donors Italy 15.1 million | France 14 million | Germany 13.7 million | Private donors Sweden 12.2 million | Italy 11.2 million | Algeria | Argentina | Austria | Belgium | Bosnia and Herzegovina | Bulgaria | Canada | Chile | China | Costa Rica | Estonia | Finland | Iceland | India | Indonesia | Ireland | Israel | Kuwait | Liechtenstein | Lithuania | Luxembourg | Monaco | Montenegro | New Zealand | Philippines | Portugal | Qatar | Republic of Korea | Russian Federation | Saudi Arabia | Serbia | Singapore | Slovakia | Sri Lanka | Thailand | Turkey | United Arab Emirates | Uruguay | Private donors

## External / Donor Relations

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**LINKS**



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# Annex

## Breakdown of the main refugee groups in Mauritania

