Refugee Influx Hodh Chargui - Mauritania

As of 09 December 2025

Overview

The situation in central and northern Mali remains highly volatile, prompting continued displacement toward Mauritania. This week, UNHCR and partners identified 1,053 newly arrived refugees across Hodh Chargui, bringing the total number since 24 October to 5,777. Arrivals continue through several informal crossing points, though the Fassala–Mégve axis remains the primary corridor as families flee insecurity, intimidation by armed actors and disruptions linked to recent incidents around Léré.

One third of newly arrived families previously lived in Mbera Refugee Camp before voluntarily repatriating to Mali years ago, only to face renewed conflict and displacement. Women and children remain the majority, with prevalent protection risks including family separation, children at risk ,older persons with limited mobility or with serious medical conditions.

New arrivals are settling across an expanding number of villages, adding pressure on already overstretched host communities where shelter, water and basic household items remain critically limited. UNHCR and partners have scaled up assistance, with core relief item distributions in Kindjerlé, Fassala/Douenkara and Djigueni reaching 75% of newly arrived families, while work continues with authorities and partners to address urgent protection and basic needs across Hodh Chargui.

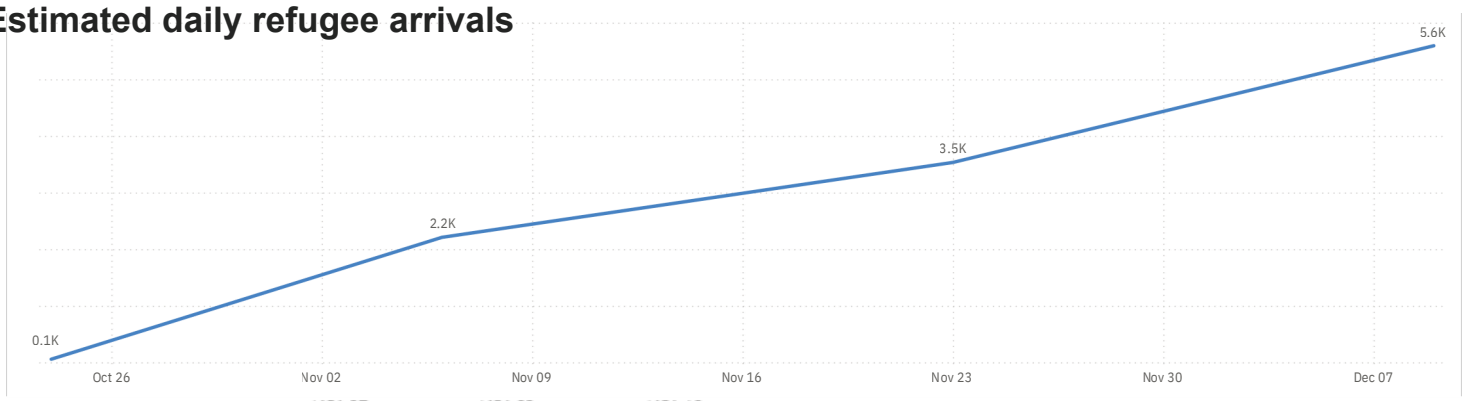
Key figures

5,777
Refugees arrived since 24th October

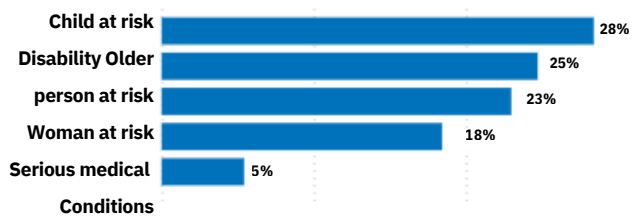
19%
Adult women

69%
Children

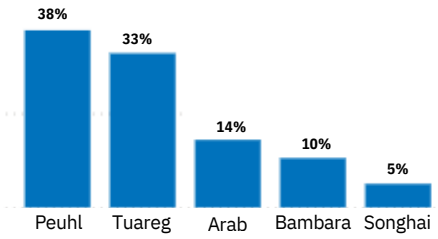
Estimated daily refugee arrivals



Vulnerabilities



Ethnicity



© UNHCR/Omar Doukali – UNHCR and partners assist refugee families in setting up emergency shelters in Kindjerlé, as households organize essential items following a relief item distribution.

The overall security situation along the Mali–Mauritania border remains unpredictable and highly unstable, with communities facing recurring insecurity, movement restrictions and severe disruptions to daily life. While small number of arrivals have been recorded through Adel Bagrou and Bousteila, displacement continues to be around Fassala, Mégve and surrounding localities due to incidents in and around Léré toward Goundam and Timbuktu.

Reports of targeted killings, including the recent public execution of a teacher, intimidation by armed actors, and blockade-related economic pressures have further eroded community resilience and triggered flight of thousand Malians. UNHCR and partners have scaled up their border monitoring along the border.

This week, UNHCR and partners identified 1,053 refugees (256 families) across Hodh Chargui, including 207 individuals (115 households) newly recorded along the Nema axis.

Since 24 October, 5,777 individuals (894 families) have sought asylum in Mauritania. The continued use of multiple entry points—most frequently Fassala, Adelbagrou and Megve illustrates the growing insecurity along the entire Mali–Mauritania border. These three entry points stretch across hundreds of kilometres, suggesting both that no route is perceived as safe and that families may be travelling long distances inside Mali to find routes they consider less dangerous.

Beneath an acacia tree, several women have settled. One breastfeeds her child, another draws water from a jerrycan. Their bodies are exhausted after days of walking.

"Living had become too costly and too dangerous. We had no choice but to leave,"

one of the women says softly.

More details are available in this "*Le Figaro*" report.

Refugees consistently report insecurity on main roads, the presence of armed actors and fear of reprisals as key reasons for avoiding main routes and official crossing. Families have settled in Nema, Timbedra, Dhar, Sondage Teidouma and Almetrewak, continuing the pattern of geographica dispersion observed in previous weeks.

Among this week's arrivals, 84 families, had previously resided in Mbera Refugee Camp before returning to Mali. Many were forced to flee due to renewed conflict and violence. They have now chosen to settle in Mauritanian villages close to the border so that they could monitor the conditions in Mali and return home should the situation allow. As one father shared, "We returned to Mali to rebuild our lives, but now fled again fearing for our lives."

The profile of the newly arrived refugees remains consistent, with majority of women and children and multiple displacement episodes before reaching Mauritania. Refugees are predominantly Peulh (38%) and Touareg (33%), with smaller numbers belonging to Arab (14%), Bambara (10%) and Songhai (5%) mirroring the ethnic composition of several conflict-affected areas in Ségou, Koulikoro, Mopti, Kayes and Timbuktu.

UNHCR registration data further highlights significant protection concerns, including children at risk (28%), older persons at risk (25%), persons with disabilities (23%), and women at risk (18%), as well as individuals with serious medical conditions. Family separation are very common. Men fled pre-emptively their home towns due to fear of reprisals, leaving women, children and elderly relatives to take safer routes to Mauritania.

As one Peuhl woman reported, "*My husband fled first as he feared that he would be targeted. I had to find a way out later with the children and my mother. We travelled separately, not knowing if we would meet ever again*."

Arriving refugees continue to report a wide range of urgent needs, consistent with previous weeks. The most frequently cited concerns related to lack of civil documentation, difficulties accessing registration sites, and family separation. UNHCR and partners observe gaps in health services, particularly for individuals with acute or chronic conditions, and persistent gaps in WASH services across villages.

Between 29 November and 8 December, UNHCR and partners conducted large-scale core-relief items and shelter distributions in Kindjerlé, Fassala/Douenkara and Djigueni, reaching 75% of newly arrived families. Distributions for the remaining families are scheduled for 15 December.

UNHCR continues to reinforce protection monitoring and coordinate with partners to address urgent needs while ensuring that assistance is delivered as safely as possible in these difficult and often dispersed settings.

© UNHCR/Omar Doukali – Mohamed ag Mohamed sits with members of his family under a makeshift shade, resting after the installation of UNHCR emergency shelters and the distribution of relief items at the settlement site in Kindjerlé.