

# Mauritania

15 August 2018

Mauritania hosts over **2,000 urban refugees and asylum-seekers** and more than **56,000 Malian refugees** in 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 July alone, **19 new arrivals** were registered in Mbera camp.

As the situation in northern Mali continues to be unstable, **Mauritania continues to receive Malian refugees** and to support refugees and vulnerable host communities.

## KEY INDICATORS

**5,133**

New arrivals from Mali since January 2018

**No**

Voluntary returns to Mali facilitated in 2018

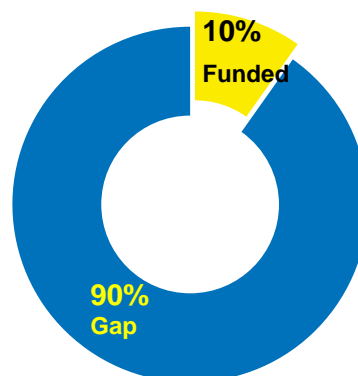
**4,863**

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

## FUNDING (AS OF 31 JULY)

**USD 20.1 M**

**2.1 M** received. **18 M** requested for the UNHCR operation in Mauritania



## POPULATION OF CONCERN

Malian refugees in Mbera camp **56,672**

Urban refugees and asylum seekers **2,319**

A total of **58,991** people are assisted by UNHCR in Mauritania.



A student trying to catch the attention of his teacher in one of the six schools in Mbera camp © UNHCR/Helena Pes

## Operational Context

In Mauritania, UNHCR provides protection and assistance to **56,672 Malian refugees** in **Mbera camp** in south-eastern Mauritania and to **1,363 urban refugees and 956 asylum-seekers** (mainly from the Central African Republic, Syria and Côte d'Ivoire) in Nouakchott and Nouadhibou.

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

In July, the 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the **Tripartite Commission Mali-Mauritania-UNHCR** for the voluntary repatriation of Malian refugees took place in Bamako, Mali. The Tripartite agreement was signed in June 2016 with the purpose of providing a framework to facilitate voluntary return, when the conditions in Mali will allow. The three parties agreed on **holding a technical meeting with representatives from the Mali and Mauritania Ministries of Education in Mali and UNHCR** to discuss issues relating to the education portfolio in Mbera camp.

During the reporting period, UNHCR and IOM organized a joint training in Nouadhibou in order to **enhance the border police and gendarmerie** (air, sea and land border) skills in terms of **international protection in a mixed migration context**. **The two-day training targeted 25 officials**. A strong focus was put on clarifying basic concepts such as the difference between refugee and migrant, the non-refoulement principle, categories with specific needs, durable solutions, difference between human trafficking and smuggling, and human trafficking in the context of asylum.

Refugees and asylum-seekers continue to seek safety in Mbera camp. **19 were newly registered** in the month of July alone.

**695 Persons with Specific Needs - PwSN** (284 male and 411 female) were assisted and accompanied to obtain magnetic cards at the registration center. In Nouadhibou, UNHCR provided **17 PwSN** with cash assistance.



*The Tripartite Commission Mali-Mauritania-UNHCR meeting in Bamako © UNHCR*

**131 babies were born in** Mbera Camp. UNHCR and its partner, the *Lutheran World Federation* (LWF), kept raising awareness among heads of households on the importance of **birth certificates for refugee children** born in Mauritania. In July, the families of **2,214 children** were summoned as part of the birth certificates activity. 529 files were submitted to the National Agency of Populations Registry and Secure Documents (ANRPTS) for processing.

As part of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) prevention and response activities in Mbera camp, UNHCR paid a visit to **15 former SGBV cases** to verify that adequate support was provided to survivors and their families.

UNHCR conducted a mission in Nouadhibou aiming at supporting the new field unit in registration and resettlement activities. During the mission, UNHCR registered **72 individuals** and carried out **66 resettlement** interviews.

In total during the month of July, UNHCR registered **129 new asylum-seekers** in urban areas.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

SGBV and child protection referral mechanisms are limited in Mauritania, preventing a comprehensive protection response. UNHCR is looking for partners to reinforce referral and protection pathways and advocate for the inclusion of refugees in all national protection mechanisms.



*A Malian refugee family at UNHCR registration centre in Mbera camp waiting for the birth certificates of their children.*

© UNHCR/José Manuel Cáceres



## EDUCATION

### Achievements and Impact

In July, UNHCR and its partners conducted meeting to address education related issues in the camp, including organizing catch-up courses for **1,973 students** (944 boys and 1029 girls) to enhance their level during the school break period.

In urban areas, during the academic year 2017/2018, UNHCR supported **298 children** to access primary education and **173** to attend secondary school. In addition to this, **62 DAFI and 10 ALPD scholarships** have been awarded to urban refugees enrolled in university. In July, **two urban refugee** students successfully got their bachelor's degree, in addition to **two students** who obtained the vocational diploma.



## HEALTH

### Achievements and Impact

UNHCR referred **27 patients** from Mbera camp to Kiffa, Nema and Nouakchott hospitals. **Twelve refugees** were provided cash support to cover medical needs. UNHCR and its partner, the *Lutheran World Federation* (LWF) ensure medical evacuations for secondary and tertiary medical cases of refugees and host community patients who cannot be treated in the camp or in Bassikounou. In addition, **360 urban refugees** received health assistance including check-ups, medical visits and surgeries.

### 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 to ensure the provision of basic health services is maintained in Mbera camp from October 2018. 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 July, UNHCR in partnership with the World Food Programme (WFP) distributed **food** and **cash** (100 MRU per person per month) to **more than 54,000 refugees** (17,798 families). During the five days of the distribution, UNHCR assisted **1033 PwSN receiving food and cash** at its five distribution centers.

Furthermore, UNHCR and WFP ended the distribution of **13,810 magnetic cards in Mbera camp**. During the monthly cash and food distribution, thanks to the magnetic cards refugees can withdraw their amount of money at the five distribution centres in Mbera camp and purchase their food at the camp market and other local shops.



*Magnetic cards being use during the cash and food distribution in Mbera camp © UNHCR/A.Itue*

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

Refugees in Mbera camp are dependent on food assistance due to very scarce local resources. 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 July, **14 litres of drinking water per person per day** were available for **refugees in Mbera Camp**.

**In July in Mbera camp**, UNHCR organized **hygiene promotion activities** focused on strengthening hygiene practices through different awareness raising techniques (door to door, focus groups, educational talks, meetings, mass session) at household and main meeting points level (water points, washing areas, latrines). **The interventions reached out 1,815 men, 2,808 women, 2,129 girls and 1,223 boys**. In addition to this, UNHCR distributed **500 trash barrels** which should serve as a place of garbage dumps for an average of **10 households** per barrel.

During the reporting period, UNHCR continued with routine monitoring and network management activities **to make the water system in Mbera camp more efficient**. These maintenance works included the **replacement of 35 taps** in all areas, the **repair of 13 taps**, and the **replacement of 9 valves** to reduce water loss. In addition to this, to secure water to refugees in Mbera camp, UNHCR started the construction works of the **300m<sup>3</sup> water tank**.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

Water supply in Mbera camp is still highly dependent on humanitarian assistance. An initial investment is 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 drought risk.

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

In urban areas, **126 micro-credit projects** are taking place between Nouakchott and Nouadhibou in partnership with DJIKKE (National Union of Caisses d'Epargnes and Credit).

**Two urban refugees and eight refugees from Mbera camp**, enrolled in the vocational training with the International Labour Organization (ILO) finished their trainings on **renewable energies and construction in earth bricks**. UNHCR and ILO are working on a follow-up on either reinforcing their knowledge through additional trainings or inserting them into a project.

UNHCR and its partner SOS Désert finished the construction of **two vaccination parks** and the rehabilitation of **two pastoral wells** benefiting neighbouring villages of Mbera camp in the Hodh Echargui region, fostering peaceful coexistence among refugees and host community.



*Urban refugees sitting the final exam on ILO training on renewable energies and construction  
© UNHCR/Viola E. Bruttomesso*

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

In July, UNHCR successfully proceeded with the resettlement of **three LGBTI cases**. To date, **30 cases have been submitted for resettlement in 2018**, out of which **seven** have already been accepted and preparing for departure.

**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.

**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 also participates in the United Nations Country Team and Humanitarian Country Team and works closely with national and international NGOs.

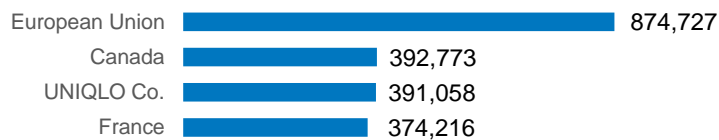
UNHCR, jointly with the Mauritanian Government, representatives of UN agencies and international NGOs signed the 2018-2022 United Nations' Sustainable Development Partnership Framework (CPDD), which integrates humanitarian and development interventions and includes a strategy to strengthen peaceful coexistence 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 broadly earmarked funds.

### EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

Earmarked contributions for the operation amount to some **US\$ 2.1 million**.



### BROADLY EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

Germany 46.6 million | Private donors Australia 7.5 million | United States of America 6.1 million | Denmark 5.7 million | Sweden 4.4 million | Finland 4.3 million | Private donors Germany 3.9 million | Norway 3.2 million | Private donors Republic of Korea 2.4 million

Iceland | Italy | Liechtenstein | Romania | Private donors

### UNEARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

Sweden 98.2 million | Norway 42.5 million | Netherlands 39.1 million | Private donors Spain 37.8 million | United Kingdom 31.7 million | Denmark 25.5 million | Private donors Republic of Korea 19 million | Switzerland 15.2 million | France 14 million | Italy 11.2 million | Private donors Japan 11.1 million | Private donors Italy 10.2 million

Algeria | Argentina | Belgium | Bosnia and Herzegovina | Canada | China | Costa Rica | Estonia | Finland | Germany | Iceland | India | Indonesia | Ireland | Kuwait | Liechtenstein | Lithuania | Luxembourg | Monaco | Montenegro | New Zealand | Philippines | Qatar | Republic of Korea | Russian Federation | Saudi Arabia | Serbia | Singapore | Slovakia | Sri Lanka | Thailand | Turkey | United Arab Emirates | Uruguay | Private donors

## External / Donor Relations

### CONTACTS

**José Manuel Cáceres**, Associate External Relations Officer, Mauritania

caceres@unhcr.org, Cel: +222 42 782 301

**Viola Eleonora Bruttomesso**, Associate Public Information Officer, Mauritania

bruttome@unhcr.org, Cel: +222 42 782 305

### LINKS



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# Annex

## Breakdown of the main refugee groups in Mauritania

