

# Mauritania

September 2024

## OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

In September 2024, Mauritania continues to face a large influx of Malian refugees. With around 91,000 estimated new arrivals between January and July 2024, the number of refugees and asylum seekers in Mauritania has surpassed 262,000 individuals.

The Hodh Chargui region in southeastern Mauritania, currently hosts over 242,000 Malian refugees, including around 110,000 in Mbera Camp and 132,000 across 70 hosting villages. In June 2024, a Refugee Response Plan for Malian refugees was launched by UNHCR and 24 partners.

In the coastal cities of Nouakchott and Nouadhibou, some 3,500 people were disembarked/intercepted (January-August 2024), a 78% increase when compared to the same period in 2023. UNHCR continues to provide vital assistance to the most vulnerable refugees and to invest in resilience in Mauritania.

## REGISTERED REFUGEES & ASYLUM-SEEKERS

## FUNDING (AS OF 1 SEPTEMBER 2024)

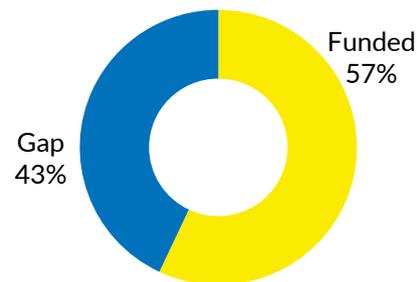
# 146,000

Refugees and asylum-seekers in Mauritania  
*As of 31 August 2024*

In Hodh Chargui region	In other regions
<h1>126,000</h1> registered Malian refugees	<h1>20,000</h1> registered refugees and asylum-seekers

# USD 45.6 million

requested for the Mauritania Operation in 2024



## ESTIMATED FIGURES IN HODH CHARGUI

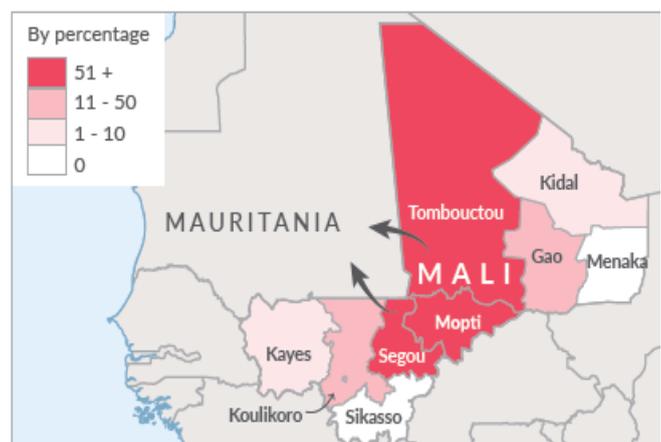
# est. 242,000

Malian refugees in Hodh Chargui  
*As of 31 July 2024*

In Camp	Out-of-Camp
<h1>110,000</h1> Malian refugees	<h1>132,000</h1> Malian refugees
 <h1>83%</h1> women and children	 <h1>87%</h1> women and children

## REGION OF ORIGIN

(as identified by key informants)



## Operational Context

The deterioration of the security situation in Mali has resulted in **an influx of around 91,000 Malian refugees** between 1 January and 31 July 2024 in Mauritania.<sup>1</sup> Over 80% of new arrivals are women and children. The majority of arrivals (75,000) have settled in host communities in the Hodh Chargui region, near the border, while 16,000 are in Mbera camp, bringing the camp's population to around 110,000 individuals, far exceeding its official capacity of 70,000. Out-of-camp, the total refugee population stands at 132,000 individuals. Since May 2024, the number out-of-camp refugees has surpassed the number of refugees in Mbera camp.

Although Malian refugees continue to benefit from prima facie recognition in Hodh Chargui, robust **registration** efforts within and beyond the camp are imperative, serving as a cornerstone for both protection measures and access to vital services. As of 31 August, the office of the national civil registry office (National Agency for Population and Secure Titles Management - ANRPTS) in Mbera camp has started issuing birth certificates for refugee children, becoming a fully functioning civil registry unit. Furthermore, ANRPTS has deployed additional staff to Hodh Chargui in order to address the backlog of registration of 115,000 out-of-camp refugees.

The significant increase in the refugee population in Hodh Chargui has added pressure to a region already facing challenges such as multidimensional poverty, low education rates, limited basic services, and climate shocks. Urgent humanitarian interventions are needed on protection, health, environment and natural resources, water, food security, and shelter, particularly in support of the out-of-camp response. New arrivals continue to report cases of indiscriminate violence from armed actors and cited horrific incidents, such as rape, kidnaping, torture and executions. Consequently, trauma is widespread among the newly displaced. Protection risks and use of negative coping mechanisms due to resource scarcity include, early and forced marriages, prolonged school dropouts, child labor, and inadequate environmental and health conditions.

In addition to the refugee population in Hodh Chargui, 20,000 refugees and asylum seekers are currently registered in urban areas (Nouakchott and Nouadhibou), bringing the **total number of displaced persons in Mauritania to around 262,000**. An intensification of mixed movements along the Mauritanian coast has also been recorded in 2024 due to i) continued instability in the Sahel and ii) stricter border controls along the Mediterranean route, with around 4,000 people intercepted or disembarked in Nouadhibou by July (78% increase compared with this period in 2023).

## UNHCR Response

With no ceasefire in sight for the conflict in Mali, UNHCR continues to work with national, regional, and local authorities to support the inclusion of Malian refugees in national systems in Mauritania. In collaboration with the government, UNHCR is coordinating the implementation of the [Refugee Response Plan for Malian refugees in Mauritania](#) (hereinafter, RRP Mauritania), through the **Refugee Coordination Forum** (formerly known as the Refugee Coordination Model) in the Hodh Chargui region. The plan provides for a comprehensive framework for both in and out of camp refugee responses, while also embedding early development approaches that build on existing resilience projects in the region.

To address the impact of new arrivals, the RRP Mauritania included interventions from 24 partners across 7 different sectors (protection, WASH, shelter, health, livelihoods, education and food security). Due to the high level of vulnerability among host populations, interventions target not only refugees in need of assistance but also 189,000 members of the host community affected by forced displacement, as well as Mauritanian returnees. Funded at approximately 50% (out of a total of 82.4 million USD required) the RRP has facilitated assistance to over 160,000 individuals.

In addition to emergency assistance, UNHCR continues to work with development actors to promote refugee inclusion in national systems and reduce their dependency on international humanitarian aid. For instance, in the health sector, UNHCR has initiated a copayment model for consultations in Mbera Health Centre, as part of its exit strategy and the inclusion of refugees in CNASS and INAYA (government project co-funded by the World Bank). In the WASH sector, UNHCR supports the transfer of services to public authorities by providing technical support to the rehabilitation of water and sanitation systems by the government and the World Bank. UNHCR's partnership with GIZ and BMZ through Pronexus has also led to enhancing refugees' self-reliance through the support of around 60 sustainable income-generating activities in Hodh Chargui. Preparations with the Ministry of Education are also on track for the first and second grades to transition from the Malian to the Mauritanian curriculum in Mbera camp as of the 2024/2025 academic year. These efforts support pledges made by Mauritania at the Global Refugee Forum in the areas of health, work, documentation, education, social protection, and transformation of Mbera camp into a sustainable human settlement.

---

<sup>1</sup> The number of new arrivals is an estimate based on data collected through monthly population monitoring flow exercises conducted across 70 villages in Mauritania with key informants, local authorities and community leaders.

## Activities in 2024



### Registration & Documentation

UNHCR works closely with the Ministry of the Interior and the National Civil Registry and Identity Agency (ANRPTS) to register refugees and asylum seekers in Mauritania. **In Hodh Chargui**, UNHCR has registered over 22,000 individuals since January 2024, both in and out of camp. As of September 2024, ANRPTS has agreed to deploy additional staff to Hodh Chargui and join UNHCR in large-scale registration of new arrivals, with the aim of addressing the existing backlog of 115,000 individuals and streamline the issuance of National Numbers of Identification (NNIs). **In urban areas**, UNHCR has registered around 3,000 individuals between January and August 2024. Documentation remains essential for enabling refugees to access basic services such as healthcare and education.



### Shelter

**In Hodh Chargui**, around 3,500 individuals have benefitted from UNHCR's cash for shelter programme between January and August 2024. This programme remains critical to ensure new arrivals can build shelters with local materials that are suitable to the harsh weather conditions in the region. This is the first time that the programme is implemented out of the camp.

**In Mbera camp**, UNHCR is actively supporting local authorities in integrating the camp into regional urban planning.



### Education

**In Mbera camp**, UNHCR, together with the Ministry of Education, has initiated preparations for the transition from the Malian to the Mauritanian curriculum (first and second school years) for the 2024/2025 academic year, including by building capacity of teachers, distributing school kits and providing tutoring classes.

**In urban areas**, UNHCR through the Education Working Group collaborates with national and regional education departments to register refugee children in school and include them in the national education database (EMIS). It also distributes cash for education and conducts awareness-raising activities with parents on the importance of education.



### Cash-Based Interventions (CBI)

**In Mbera camp**, UNHCR provides **multi-purpose cash** assistance to extremely vulnerable refugees, including those with specific needs, at-risk women and girls, and children. This assistance reached over 2000 individuals as of August 2024, and aims to mitigate risks of harmful coping strategies. To alleviate the pressure on natural resources in Hodh Chargui, UNHCR is also expanding its **Cash for Gas** project to reduce reliance on charcoal and wood for cooking. **Out-of-camp**, UNHCR also implements CBI under the coordination of the CBI Working Group, co-led by UNHCR, WFP, and Tekavoul. As of August 2024, 10,000 refugees benefit from Tekavoul on par with nationals and over 2,000 out-of-camp refugees benefitted from UNHCR's multi-purpose cash assistance.



### Water and Sanitation

**In Mbera camp**, UNHCR is actively involved in transferring services to public authorities, initiating the solarization of water systems, rehabilitating latrines and working with the government to enhance water networks. UNHCR also supports community-based structures in the camp working on waste collection and on the use of excrements from latrines in ongoing reforestation and gardening projects in the camp. In 2024, over 350 latrines were rehabilitated, and new water points were built to facilitate new arrivals' access to clean water.

**Out-of-camp**, UNHCR's interventions include the rehabilitation/drilling of boreholes in host villages prioritized through participatory community planning exercises co-led by community leaders.



### Livelihoods

**In Hodh Chargui**, UNHCR works closely with Techghil (public employment agency) on four key areas of interventions: i) micro, small and medium enterprise development, ii) financial inclusion, iii) sustainable agriculture and iv) coordination and advocacy. As a result, over 760 people participated in market gardening activities in Mbera Camp, producing nourishment for themselves and families, as well as generating revenue with the sales. Additionally, 62 entrepreneurship projects were supported by UNHCR in and out of Mbera camp, all of them were designed with sustainability components. In 2024, UNHCR contributed to the government's [National Financial Inclusion Strategy \(2023-2028\)](#), which now includes key actions to enhance refugees' access to financial products and services.



### Health

In 2023, UNHCR and the Ministry of Health developed a [roadmap for enhancing refugee inclusion in the national healthcare system](#). UNHCR activities include awareness campaigns, supporting healthcare structures and mass vaccination campaigns and addressing malnutrition. This year, UNHCR has introduced a copayment model for most vulnerable refugees and full payment for less vulnerable refugees in the camp, as part of its efforts to move towards [sustainable programming](#). UNHCR continues to cover costs for most vulnerable new arrivals. As of June 2024, over 102,000 medical consultations were supported by UNHCR in the camp.

#### DONORS As of 1 September 2024

UNHCR is grateful for the support of donors to UNHCR operations in Mauritania: CERF | Czechia | European Union | France | Germany | Italy | Luxembourg | Monaco | Republic of Korea | Spain | United States of America | other private donors

CONTACT: Ana Carolina Pinto Dantas, [pintodan@unhcr.org](mailto:pintodan@unhcr.org)

LINKS: [UNHCR Global Focus](#) | [UNHCR Mauritania Website](#)