

MAURITANIA

20 May 2020

UNHCR COVID-19 response

Committed to stay and deliver, UNHCR continues providing life-saving assistance to refugees and asylum-seekers by adjusting its programme to the fast-evolving circumstances. **Under the leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator and together with the UN sister Agencies**, UNHCR supports the National Response Plan. **In the Hodh Ech-Chargui region, UNHCR is co-coordinating all the interventions by humanitarian partners, in close coordination with the local authorities, based on the Refugee Coordination Model.**

Key figures:

61,594 Malian refugees in the Bassikounou area¹

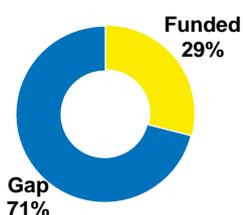
6,098 Malian refugees with specific needs identified¹

4,227 refugees and asylum-seekers registered in urban areas¹

3,536 newly registered in Mbera refugee camp since 1 January 2020¹ (4,557 in 2019)

Funding

USD **24.6** M for 2020



Received as of 15 May 2020

¹ Data as of 30 April 2020

Health

In line with its commitment during the Global Refugee Forum to include refugees in the national health system, the Government of Mauritania has consistently included refugees in its preparedness and response.

At the request of the Government, **UNHCR has delivered eight Refugee Housing Unit as isolation units**, six to the main points of entry for refugees from Mali (Doueinkara-Fassala, Adel Bagrou and Goghi) and two to the health center in Bassikounou. This is in addition to **50 shelters for quarantine** delivered at Doueinkara-Fassala. In April, **UNHCR made available two ambulances at Bassikounou and Nema for COVID-19 interventions**. At the request of the local authority, 145 samples of suspect cases were transported from the Hodh Ech-Chargui region to Nouakchott for testing. All cases tested negative. **Procurement of the large quantities of hygiene and protection kits is ongoing.**

Protection

In line with the Government decree, and to protect both refugees and staff, **UNHCR adjusted some protection activities which involves direct contact between staff and refugees**. This includes enhancement of remote assistance for psychosocial support and legal assistance. **In the case of life-saving activities involving direct contact between staff and persons of concern** such as distribution of cash and/or food and NFIs, UNHCR is taking **preventive measures following WHO standards** i.e. PPEs for the staff, social distancing, handwashing points, etc.

CBI - Cash for Social Protection

To mitigate the severe socio-economic shock of COVID-19, UNHCR distributed **one off Cash for Social Protection** to more than 1,000 most vulnerable refugee households (around 2,500 individuals) in Nouakchott and Nouadhibou. The distribution has been very much appreciated by the beneficiaries.

Communication with Communities

Reinforcement of the communication with the community to prevent the propagation of the COVID-19 is UNHCR's key priority. Trained **refugee community mobilisers** are raising awareness on preventive measures including social distancing and hand washing both in Mbera camp and host communities, urban areas, and key border points. In Mbera, more than 90% of beneficiaries showed correct understanding on the preventive measures, according to the survey conducted by refugee community mobilizers in partnership by Save the Children. In collaboration with partners and local authorities, **UNHCR distributed more than 12,000 awareness-raising posters and leaflets in the Hodh Ech-Chargui region.**

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