



SUPPORTING INCLUSION OF REFUGEES IN THE NATIONAL SOCIAL SAFETY NET

MAURITANIA

Since 2012, Mauritania has been hosting Malian refugees on its territory following the outbreak of the security crisis in Mali. As of October 2023, there are some 87,900 registered Malian refugees in the arid south-east Bassikounou district, where M'bera refugee camp is located, as well as 7000 in other districts of Hodh Chargui region and 13,200 in the cities of Nouakchott and Nouadhibou. While some refugees are on the path to self-reliance, many still find it difficult to meet their basic needs.

Conscious of the likely **prolonged nature of forced displacement** in the country, the Government of Mauritania is strongly committed to ensuring the protection of refugees while promoting their increased self-reliance, in tandem with bolstering the resilience of host communities.

Mauritania is party to several international conventions related to refugees. At the Global Refugee Forum in 2019 the **Government of Mauritania made several pledges** including the commitments to enroll all refugees with the civil registry, issue them with national identification numbers and cards, allow refugee inclusion in national systems as well as ensuring their access to labour markets and health services under the same conditions as nationals.

Since the establishment of M'bera camp in 2012, the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the UN World Food Programme (WFP) and the Government of Mauritania have worked closely together on the provision of humanitarian assistance and livelihoods programming to support refugees in meeting their essential needs.

In 2021, the Government of Mauritania, with support from the World Bank and in collaboration with UNHCR and WFP, **included refugee households in the national Social Registry of Mauritania**, to allow eligible refugees to benefit from the assistance provided under national social protection programmes.



THE SOCIAL REGISTRY OF MAURITANIA

The social protection system in Mauritania has several programmes which deliver social transfers to specific groups of people to reduce the risk of extreme poverty. WFP and UNHCR have supported refugee inclusion in social protection programmes, including:

- ❖ The **TEKAVOUL programme**, which provides the poorest households with **monthly cash transfers** (transferred quarterly) and **social promotion activities** (designed to promote knowledge of essential family practices and investment in early childhood development). Households are enrolled for a **five-year programme cycle**.
- ❖ The **EL MAOUNA programme**, implemented by the Food Security Commission (CSA) since 2017, to enable households to **cope with shocks** that affect their well-being, particularly during the lean season and droughts.

KEY STEPS

IN THE INCLUSION OF REFUGEES IN THE TEKAVOUL SOCIAL SAFETY NET

The Government of Mauritania, WFP and UNHCR, with support from the UNHCR-WFP Joint Programme Excellence and Targeting Hub (Joint Hub) undertook the following key activities.



DATA SHARING

Establishing secure data sharing processes between UNHCR and the Government of Mauritania to ensure data on refugees inform the identification of eligible households, following data protection principles.



ASSESSMENT

Household survey of all refugees in M'bera camp and urban areas, identifying needs and socio-economic characteristics, informing the targeting approach for assistance, and validating lists for inclusion in the Social Registry.



COMMUNITY SENSITIZATION

Awareness raising and community messaging on the Social Registry, the assessment and targeting process, encouraging refugee engagement and buy-in.



PROTECTION ANALYSIS

Risk analysis on the inclusion of refugees in the national social protection programmes, including assistance coverage and values, access to services, possible social tensions and an exit strategy.



TARGETING

The development of a targeting model for categorizing and identifying refugees as highly vulnerable, moderately vulnerable or self-reliant.



APPEALS MECHANISM

Setting up an appeals mechanism through joint appeal desks at offices in the camp, with appeals received by panels including UNHCR, WFP and community representatives, and a joint mobile team to record appeals during home visits where needed.

LONGER-TERM PROGRAMMING

In support of the Government of Mauritania and guided by the UN Vision for Hodh Chargui Region, UNHCR and WFP are **supporting refugee livelihoods** and **peaceful coexistence** between host communities and refugees.

UNHCR and WFP provide **complementary approaches** which aim to respond to the immediate humanitarian needs of refugees, while also supporting the financial inclusion of refugee and host community households, diversifying their sources of income and contributing to building assets.

Since January 2021, UNHCR and GIZ have also been collaborating through the [ProNexus project](#), to improve access to social protection and environmentally-sensitive livelihoods opportunities for refugees and vulnerable host community members. This project aims to strengthen capacity for socio-economic inclusion of refugees and vulnerable members of host communities in Mauritania, thereby supporting the transition from humanitarian assistance to inclusion in government social protection programmes and greater self-reliance. With the support of the European Union, UNHCR also supports host community members and refugees in self-employment for greater self-reliance.

- ❖ UNHCR is **supporting entrepreneurs** through financial literacy training, setting up business plans, mentoring, financial inclusion and cash grants, as well as market gardening, both in and around M'bera camp.
- ❖ WFP is developing a **durable solutions package** for refugees in M'bera Camp as well as host community members, that will focus on income generation, financial inclusion and strengthened linkages to the Government's social protection programmes.





INCLUSION IN ADDITIONAL SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAMMES

The enrolment of refugees in the Social Registry has contributed to the inclusion of refugees in national social protection programmes other than Tekavoul and El Maouna. For example, vulnerable refugees of M'bera camp registered in the Social Registry have benefitted from free healthcare support under the Ministry of Health 'Inaya' programme. Refugee enrolment in the Social Registry paves the way for broader inclusion in the future.

SUPPORT TO THE SOCIAL REGISTRY

WFP and UNHCR, in collaboration with the Joint Programme Excellence and Targeting Hub, have supported - and continue to support - the Social Registry in the following areas:

- ❖ Drafting, designing and implementing a **refugee sensitization and communication** strategy
- ❖ Providing expertise to inform the **household survey design**, including the questionnaire and data collection plan
- ❖ Contributing to the **training of survey enumerators**
- ❖ Providing **refugee data to the Social Registry** (under data sharing agreement) to identify refugees and ensure that all households are surveyed
- ❖ Supporting data collection monitoring, data cleaning and **data analysis** (profiling and targeting)
- ❖ Receiving and responding to **appeals** regarding refugees' eligibility for assistance

WFP and UNHCR are committed to ongoing collaboration with the Government of Mauritania in order to continue enrolling refugees in the Social Registry and support refugee inclusion in national social protection programmes.