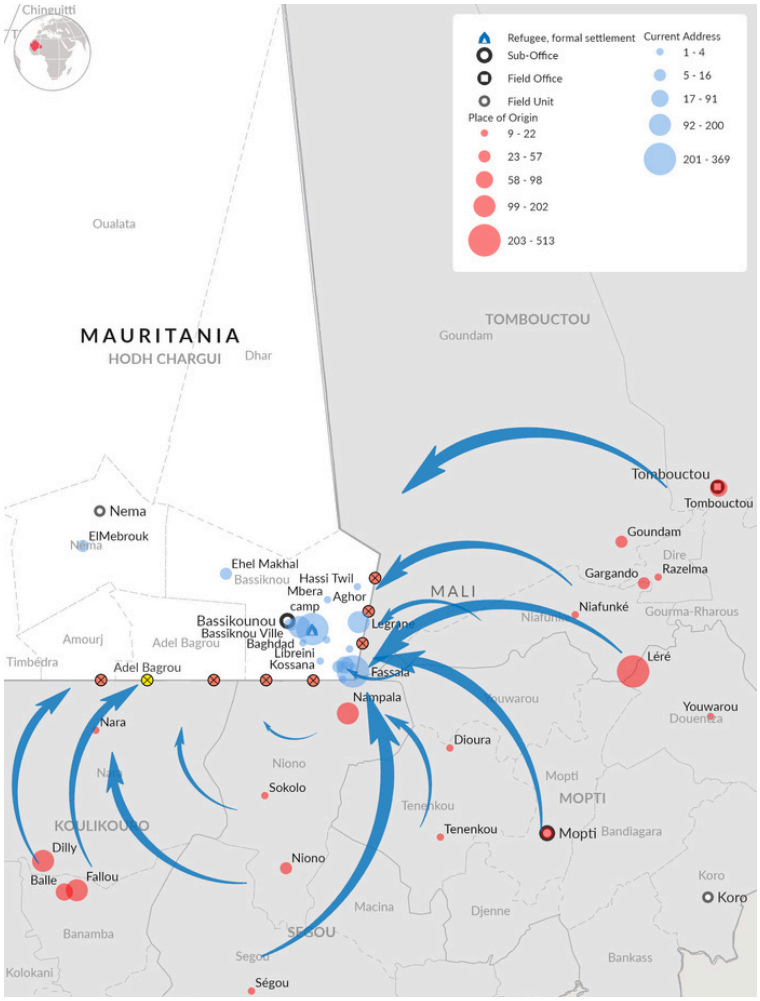
Refugee Influx Hodh Chargui - Mauritania

As of 02 December 2025

Overview

The situation in central and northern Mali remains highly volatile, prompting continued displacement toward Mauritania. This week, UNHCR and partners identified 778 newly arrived refugees along the Fassala–Mégve border areas, bringing the total number of people reached since 24 October to 4,540. Children represent three-quarters of all new arrivals, as families continue to send the youngest and most vulnerable ahead amid insecurity and the near-absence of transportation. Most new arrivals originate from the Léré area, particularly Agmeimine, with some fled renewed violence in Djioura.

Newly arrived families are settling across a growing number of villages placing additional pressure on already overstretched host communities where water, shelter and basic household items are critically limited. UNHCR and partners have scaledup registration and assistance, with non-food item distributions in Kinderlé and Fassala reaching out to 60% of newly arrived refugees, while coordinating with authorities and partners to address urgent protection needs, food assistance and other essential support in Hodh Chargui.



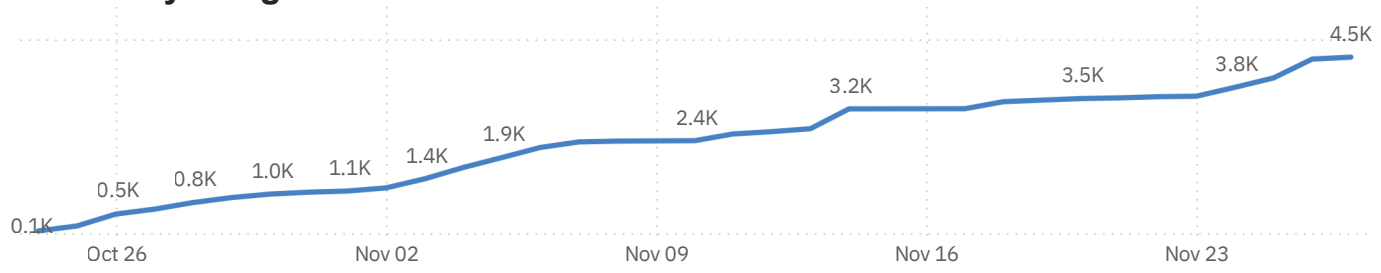
Key figures

4540
Refugees arrived since 24th October

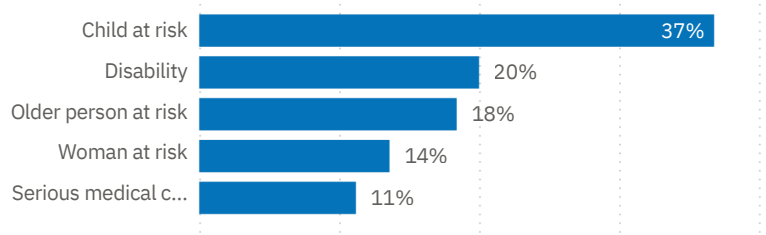
19%
Adult women

69%
Children

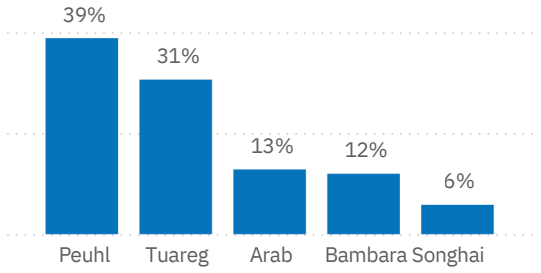
Estimated daily refugee arrivals



Vulnerabilities



Ethnicity



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© UNHCR/Omar Doukali – Inside UNHCR tent they were just allocated, Mohamed and his fellow Malian refugees open the relief kits they received—shelter materials, clothing, and basic household items—provided last week after their arrival in Mauritania.

The security situation in central and northern Mali continues to deteriorate, with Léré and surrounding areas experiencing a marked escalation of violence and coercion against civilians. Over the past week, UNHCR Mali reported a series of serious incidents, including targeted killings, intimidation of community leaders and civil servants, and expansion of movement restrictions and access constraints to essential services imposed by armed groups.

Armed groups have also intensified pressure through extortion, livestock theft, and the imposition of informal "taxes," deepening the economic vulnerability of families already affected by displacement and disrupting their access to markets

Tensions have risen along the transboundary grazing zones between Mali and Mauritania. These deteriorating dynamics continue to force families, particularly women, children, and other at-risk individuals, to seek safety in Mauritania, often after experiencing multiple displacement episodes within Mali.

This week, 778 newly arrived refugees were identified, bringing the total figures since 24 October to 4,540 people. The average size among the latest arrivals is about 6, higher than the recent cumulative average reflecting the practice of sending larger groups of children and extended family members.

Children continue to represent a large share of those fleeing Mali in recent weeks. This week, they accounted for 75% of all new arrivals, compared to 69% since 24 October. With transportation extremely limited and insecurity intensifying along key routes, families continue to prioritize sending children and other vulnerable members ahead when rare opportunities to move emerge.

"Who's going to look after my children? Who's going to look after me?"

For women like Bintu (not her real name), the journey from Mali is marked by fear, loss, and impossible choices.
With women representing just 19% of new arrivals and children accounting for 69%, the demographics alone signal the alarming reality: families are sending their children ahead to escape escalating violence with almost no means of reaching safety together.

More details are available in this BBC report.

Most newly arrived refugees originate from the Léré area, particularly from Agmeimine. A smaller group fled from Djioura, describing a rapid deterioration of conditions and renewed violence that forced them to leave.. Refugees identified this week have settled in Bagdad and Ligrane closer to borders, while additional groups observed in Almetrewak and Mahkel Oulad Alouche.

Living conditions across these localities remain difficult. Refugees consistently report an acute lack of water, limited shelter options, and very low access to basic household items. Partners on the ground highlight that most households are composed predominantly of children and that several newly arrived families “possess nothing”, reconfirming the urgent need for shelter, water, food assistance and immediate protection support.

A mother of eight from Léré, who fled Mali as fighting and a tightening blockade made daily life impossible told UNHCR teams:
“*I left Mali with empty hands, only my courage. We arrived alive, people helped us, and that keeps me going.*”
Her story reflects the reality of countless families arriving with an urgent need for safety and basic support.

As arrivals continue across several villages in the Hodh Chargui, UNHCR and partners are preparing additional distributions to address the growing protection and other needs. Discussions are ongoing with partners to organise food distributions. While newly arrived families remain the priority given to their high vulnerabilities, many families who fled earlier face similarly precarious conditions. The scale of needs already exceeds available resources should the influx continue, and additional support is required to ensure that all refugee families can access adequate shelter, food and core relief items.

© UNHCR / Omar Doukali A Malian mother who fled the blockade and violence in Léré, while community members help her set it up. After days on the road with the children she cares for, this shelter offers the first sense of stability since their escape.