Development in Forced Displacement Settings

UNHCR Mauritania — June 2023

UNHCR's operational objectives in Mauritania

The refugee response in Mauritania focuses not only on core protection and humanitarian responses but also on several other priorities aimed at securing durable solutions for refugees[1].

1. **Protect refugees and respond to their humanitarian needs**

2. **Include them in national systems, empower them to build their self-reliance and find long term solutions for their displacement**

UNHCR in Mauritania has developed a multiyear strategy (2023-2026) articulated around protection and solutions for all forcibly displaced populations residing in Mauritania. The objectives and interventions are aligned with the Global Compact on Refugees, which represents the political will and ambition of the international community for strengthened cooperation and solidarity with refugees and affected host countries.

UNHCR's humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach in Mauritania

UNHCR leads, in accordance with the Refugee Coordination Model, the **humanitarian response to refugee needs** in Mauritania, including support for **emergency preparedness** in the Hodh Chargui region and along the southern border of Mauritania with Mali.

In November 2017, Mauritania became eligible for the IDA-18 Sub-Window for Refugees and Host Communities, enabling increased humanitarian and development cooperation and refugee inclusion in the areas of health care, social safety nets, water management and sanitation, local development and urbanization. Additional support through the IDA-20 Sub-Window for Refugees and Host Communities is being considered.

During the **Global Refugee Forum** of 2019, the Government of Mauritania made a number of key pledges, relating to access to national health systems, the development of a legal framework, access to documentation and access to the labor market.

In this context, UNHCR plays a crucial role in supporting the efforts of the Government of Mauritania, sister UN agencies, development actors, donors, refugees themselves and other partners such as the Alliance Sahel, in full alignment with the UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel and the UN Integrated Vision for Joint action in the Hodh Chargui region, to ensure **greater socio-economic inclusion of refugees and asylum-seekers in national service delivery systems** (see Annex I). Moreover, as part of this objective and to facilitate a smooth **transition from a humanitarian refugee response to the gradual inclusion of refugees**, UNHCR works with partners on ensuring transparency in the management of integrated development projects in areas hosting refugees.

Malian refugee woman gardening vegetables in Mbera camp.

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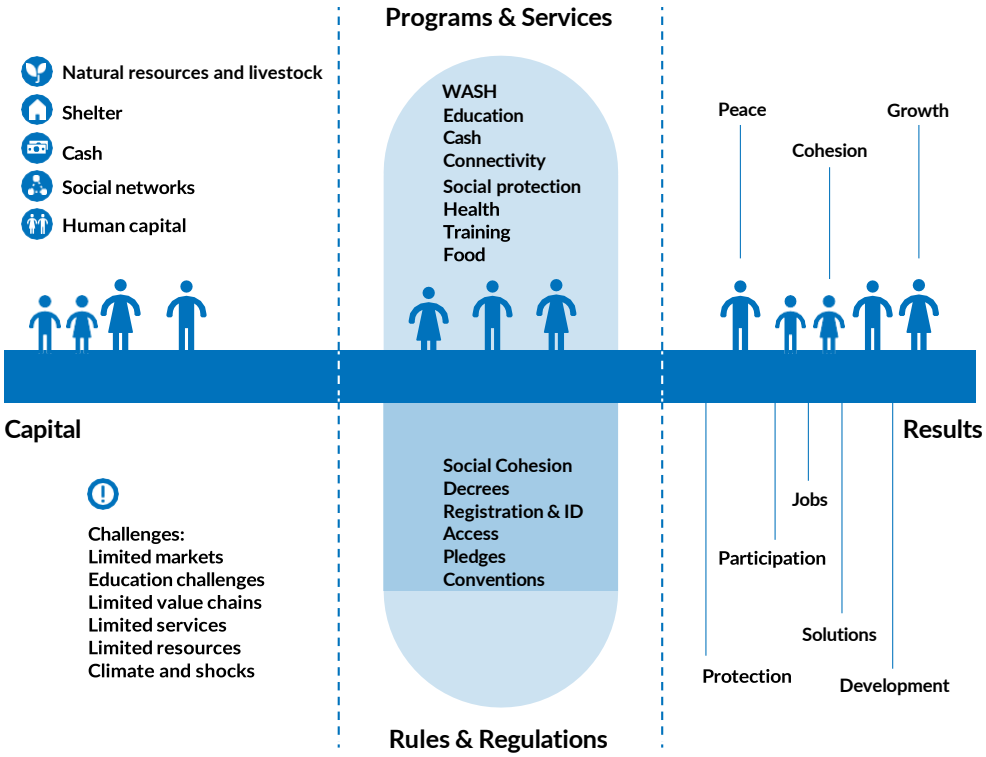
Map of Mauritania with key figures

[1] *For more information on UNHCR Mauritania's Country 2022 Strategy, visit Global Focus.*

Economic inclusion path in Mauritania



The aim of socio-economic inclusion for refugees and asylum-seekers in national systems is to enhance self-reliance in situations of displacement. UNHCR work with partners to ensure:

- Access to quality social services is maintained for the most vulnerable;
- Support to accompany increased interventions of government actors and expansion of development activities including refugees;
- Investment in climate and environmental activities, supporting natural resources development, plans for reforestation, access to water and sustainable sources of energy;
- Promotion of labour and economic development by anchoring in local development plans and larger investments.

UNHCR Representative talks with a refugee shop owner selling LPG gas in Mbera camp for domestic use. In 2022, UNHCR started pilot projects to promote clean cooking energies instead of charcoal and wood. ©UNHCR / OMAR

Sector	Current Status	Next Steps	Final prospect
Social protection/Cash	Vulnerable refugees are highly dependent on UNHCR and WFP Most refugees in Nouakchott, Nouadhibou and Mbera camp are included in the national Social Registry Government-run social transfer services (Tekavoul/Elmaouna) serve vulnerable refugees in and around Mbera camp and in Nouadhibou	Additional surveys are conducted to include new arrivals/absent during the first survey in Mbera camp in the national Social Registry (ongoing) Governement-run social transfer services (Tekavoul) serve vulnerable refugees in Nouakchott, Nema and neighboring areas Refugees are included in the new National Strategy on Social Protection	Social protection services supported by more diversified stakeholders, including Government-run programmes
Livelihoods	Limited self-reliance (approx. 5 % in the camp) Refugees face difficulties in accessing formal jobs National employment services (Techghil) are accessible to refugees	Large-scale training and (green) jobs programmes are launched in Hodh Chargui A joint strategy for refugee access to training and job opportunities (in particular through the reduction of administrative barriers) is developed with ILO	Large-scale job programmes are created for refugees Refugees access formal job services and opportunities
Health	Until mid-2020, health was 100% funded and implemented by humanitarians in the camp In Mbera, transfer to the Ministry of Health happened mid-2020 Large support from UNHCR continues (camp and urban refugees) A roadmap on refugee inclusion in national health services was adopted by the Government of Mauritania	The offer of specialized care in Hodh Chargui available for refugees and nationals is increased (ongoing) Refugees are included in a pilot health insurance programme supported by the CNASS, the National Health Solidarity Fund (ongoing) UNHCR support gradually decreases and Ministry of Health investments gradually increase	Refugees have access to sustainable health services provided by the Ministry of Health
WASH and Environmental Protection	WASH systems are funded by UNHCR in Mbera camp Energy sources used by refugees in and around Mbera camp have a negative impact on the natural environment and people's health Environmental protection is funded by humanitarian and small-scale funding streams	The transfer of WASH systems in Mbera is effective (expected by the end of 2024) Access to WASH services is maintained for all refugees in Mbera, including the most vulnerable Pilot gas and biogas project are conducted in Mbera camp (ongoing) Large-scale environmental programmes in Hodh Chargui and Mbera camp are supported by diversified funding streams	WASH services are integrated in the national system in Mbera camp Refugees in and around Mbera have access to clean and renewable energy Ecosystems and communities are more resilient in and around Mbera camp

Education	Refugees follow the Malian curriculum in the camp coordinated by UNHCR and UNICEF Education in Mbera camp is mainly funded by humanitarian funding Refugees residing outside the camp in rural and ruban areas attend local schools with ad hoc UNHCR support Refugee educational needs are included in the national education policy letter and the education diagnosis (RESEN)	Refugee inclusion is costed and included in the national education strategy (PNDSE 3)	Refugees are gradually integrated in the national education system in Mbera camp Refugees are self-reliant enough to cover education costs
Protection	Refugee status determination is fully handled by UNHCR Registration is done by UNHCR and Government services (ANRPTS) but some refugees are without IDs Response to gender-based violence are only funded by humanitarian funding streams Refugees are included in child protection national procedures	All refugees have a national identification number and can access birth registration	Asylum law is passed All refugees have access to IDs (cards) GBV prevention/responses for refugees are backed by diversified stakeholders Response to gender-based violence are only funded by humanitarian funding streams Refugees are included in child protection national procedures
Territorial planning	Territorial planning of Mbera camp is planned by UNHCR	The Ministry of Urban planning is in charge of territorial planning in Mbera camp and an urban plan (SDAU) is conducted by 2025 Mbera camp and surroundings areas are electrified	Access to land plots is secured and housing is improved in Mbera camp
Crosscutting	Limited inclusion of refugees in national strategies and surveys / data systems Refugee coordination model is fully functional Development coordination needs reinforcement	Refugees are part of the next national census of the population In the Hodh Chargui region, coordination mechanisms held at regional and district levels are supported and include refugee issues	Refugees are included in all nation-wide or local relevant strategies and surveys The coordination of humanitarian interventions and development activities ensure that social cohesion (nexus) is strengthened

Annex I - UNHCR joint projects with development partners

Support to UNHCR in facilitating the operationalization of the Global Refugee Compact in the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus (SUN Global Programme) 2021-2023

EUR 8.1m

Objective: Build capacity to promote the socio-economic inclusion of refugees, asylum seekers and vulnerable members of host communities in Mauritania. This project builds on the commitments made by the Mauritanian government during the Global Refugee Forum relating to the development of a legal framework, access to documentation and the inclusion of refugees in national protection systems as well as access to the labor market. The project also aims at complementing the projects supported through the World Bank's IDA18 Refugee Sub-Window.
These investments and the increased involvement of development actors require support in the transition period towards inclusion in national systems.

World Bank projects (non-transactional relationship with UNHCR):

Social Safety Nets - TEKAVOUL

$45m incl. $18m from Refugee Sub-Window (RSW)

Objective: Increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the nationwide adaptive social safety net system and its coverage of poor and vulnerable households with targeted social transfers, including in refugee and host communities.

Health - INAYA

$23m incl. $15m from RSW

Objective: Scale up the Performance-Based Financing (PBF) system Inaya to improve the utilization and quality of reproductive, maternal, neonatal, and child health and nutrition services in Hodh Chargui, benefiting refugees and the Mauritanian host population by addressing health needs of refugees and reinforcing the health facilities of Mbera camp.

Water & Sanitation - WASH

$44m incl. $14m from RSW

Objective: Increase access to improved water and sanitation services in selected rural areas and small towns (including Mbera camp) and strengthen the performance of sector institutions.

Decentralization and productive intermediate cities - MOUDOUN

$66m incl. $20m from RSW

Objective: Improve access to local services in selected localities (including Mbera camp) and strengthen the capacities of Local Governments to plan and manage local public services.

African Development Bank:

Support project for G5 Sahel member States in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic

July 2020 – December 2021

$3.86m

Objective: Strengthen the capacity of the G5 Sahel countries to reduce the spread of the virus, halt the COVID-1 9 pandemic and support the resilience of vulnerable communities in the Hodh Chargui region.

European Union Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa (EUTF in Africa): Strengthening the resilience of populations displaced by instability in North Mali and supporting peaceful coexistence between communities

July 2017 – June 2021

EUR 5.29m

Objective: Contribute to the reduction of instability and vulnerability factors through the creation of socio-economic opportunities for displaced populations and their host communities while facilitating the reintegration of repatriated refugees who have returned spontaneously to their areas of origin.

UN Peacebuilding Fund (UNPBF): Joint UNHCR-IOM project

October 2020 – March 2022

$1.5m

Objective: Strengthen social cohesion in the Hodh Chargui region thanks to a better inclusion of women and children in institutional and community decisions and in socioeconomic life to reduce intra and infra community tensions around access to natural resources.

UN Peacebuilding Fund (UNPBF): Joint UNHCR-UNDP project

January 2022 – June 2023

$1.5m

Objective: Peacebuilding through environmental activities among young refugee men and women and host communities in the Hodh Chargui region of Mauritania.

European union – NDICI Global-Europe, MFF 2021 – 2027' Durable solutions for forcibly displaced in Sub-Saharan Africa' : Inimaj Project

January 2023 – December 202

EUR 1.8m

Objective: Strengthen protection and socio- economic inclusion for populations displaced by instability in Mali and support social cohesion between host and refugee communities in Mauritania.