Hodh Chargui Factsheet – Mauritania (2025 Overview)

January 2026

166,199
REGISTERED REFUGEES IN HODH CHARGUI

79%
WOMEN AND CHILDREN

7,931
NEW ARRIVALS SINCE OCTOBER 2025

9.5%
INDIVIDUALS WITH SPECIFIC NEEDS

CONTEXT

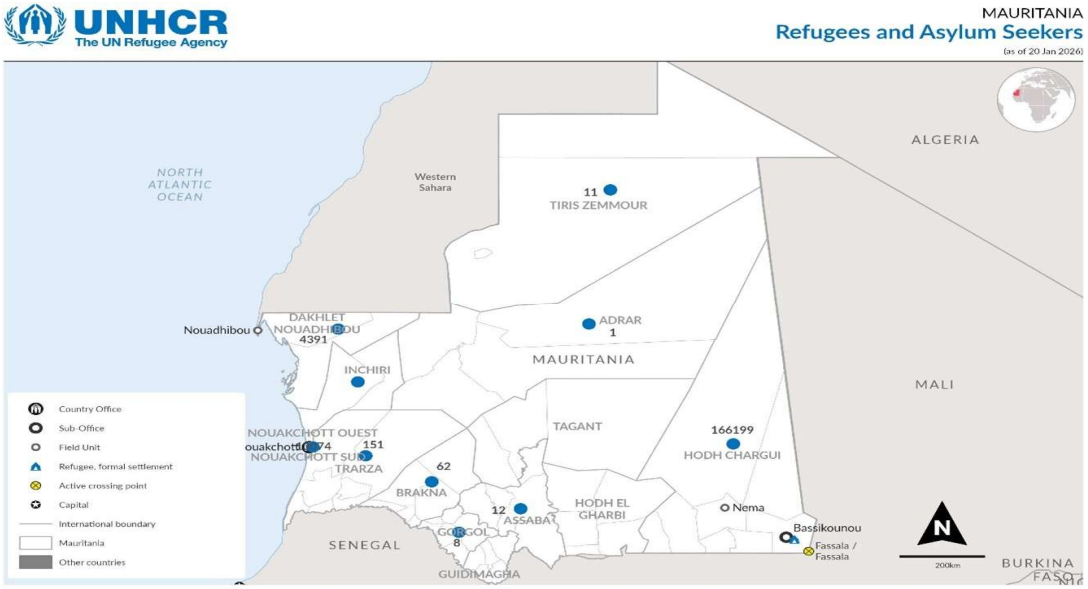
As of December 2025, Mauritania hosts an estimated **309,000** refugees and asylum-seekers, the vast majority of whom reside in the Hodh Chargui region, where they represent nearly **35**% of the local population.

Established in 2012, Mbera Camp currently shelters approximately **120,000** refugees, while an additional **170,000** have settled within host communities across the region.

The security situation in neighboring Mali remains highly volatile, with recent escalations further destabilizing border areas. In this context, large-scale returns are not anticipated, and UNHCR and partners are preparing for a potential new influx in the coming weeks.

In absence of near-term prospects for durable solutions, UNHCR's protection and solutions strategy in Hodh Chargui focuses on strengthening inclusive national systems to ensure refugees have access to their rights and essential services alongside host communities. While advancing this long-term vision, UNHCR also provides a tailored, context-specific response to address immediate protection and assistance needs, in collaboration with partners.

FUNDING



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OUR MAIN ACTIVITIES

PROTECTION

Gender - Based Violence

How: via women's groups, refugee leaders, and protection committees
Services: case management, psychological support, refferals with (Partners: CIAUD, RET Internation, El Insaniya)
Achievements: **193 cases in 2025** (early marriages, emotional and physical abuse etc)
Challenges: gaps in medical care, legal assistance, and safe housing

Assistance to people with Specific Needs (PSN)

- **19,084 refugees** with specific needs (62% women)

How: via trained refugee volunteers, early detection (registration & community)
Services: Psychological Support, material aid, legal support, multisectoral response (CIAUD & RET)
Achievements: 3,958 PSN followed up and referred (2025)
Challenges: Budget cuts affecting cash assistance & case management

Child Protection

- Children represent **56%** of total refugees with risks

Risks: sexual violence, child marriage, school dropout
How: establishment of safe spaces and strengthening of child protection systems

Accountability to Affected Population

How: via protection offices, suggestion boxes, helpdesk multilingual operators & WhatsApp channel, community leaders outreach volunteers
Achievements: **3,788 cases** handled nationwide (31.4% related to arrests & expulsions plus RSD, health, documentation, cash assistance and education)

REGISTRATION

Registered refugees and asylum seekers in Hodh Chargui

IN CAMP	OUT-OF-CAMP
119,650	46,549

How:
- Via Biometric Identity Management System all registered refugees receive verification
- National Identification Number (NIN), enabling access to essential services with ANRPTS
- Birth certificates for children born in Mauritania

Achievements:
- **91%** of refugees registered in the system
- follow-up of **289 cases** with judiciary authorities

Challenges:
- Limited resources in the out-of-camp area
- Restriction of freedom of movements since 2024

HEALTH

Access to Services

- ✓ Refugees included in the national health system
- ✓ Quality services available in & out of camp

Outside the Camp

- ✓ Government facilities: out-of-pocket payment
- ✓ Mobile clinics (MSF, ALIMA, UNFPA, UNICEF): free services

Cost & Coverage Constraints (2025)

- **Budget cuts**: Most health services in the camp are no longer free
- **From January to June**: Refugees in categories 1–2 received free care with a consultation fee increasing from MRU 20 to MRU 50
- **Since September**: UNHCR support is limited to children under 5 and pregnant women

Health infrastructure

Hodh Chargui

- 2 hospitals
- 14 health centers
- 226 health posts

(Available to refugees and host communities)

Bassiknou District

- 1 hospital
- 3 health centers
- 19 health posts

Mbera Camp

- 1 hospital
- 3 health centers

EDUCATION

System & Policy

- Current curriculum: **Malian** with Progressive integration into **Mauritanian national system**
- **2023**: Budgeted plan aligned with the National Program for the Development of the Education Sector – Phase 3 (PNDSE III)
- **2025**: 3-year integration roadmap launched (UNHCR– Ministry of Education) and a Ministerial circular ensuring **refugee access to schools**
- **SIGE-R** (Refugee Student Information and Management System) deployed in schools hosting refugee students

Access & Capability

- **Mbera Camp:**
  - ✓ 7,931 students (48.66% girls)
  - ✓ 8 primary schools, 2 secondary schools
  - ✓ 182 teachers (mainly refugee teachers)
- **Out-of-Camp** :730 refugee students (47.8% girls) enrolled in schools

System & Partnerships

- Education sector co-led by **UNHCR & UNICEF**
- 22 preschool centers reopened in 2025 (UNICEF)
- **ProNexus project** (2024-2027) | UNHCR & GIZ (BMZ) – Data, governance, infrastructure etc

CASH AND SOCIAL SAFETY NETS

Cash Assistance

- **6,498 refugee households** assisted (in-camp and out-of-camp)
- **642 host community members** supported
- **Target groups**: at-risk women and children
- **Priority needs covered**:
  - Food and shelter
  - Health services
  - Clean energy solutions
  - Livelihood activities
  - Multi-purpose cash assistance (MPCA)

Core Relief Items

- **9,345+ families** received core relief items in 2025

Inclusion in National Social Protection

Refugees are included in government social assistance programs on equal terms with nationals

Tekavoul Programme:

- Around 1,700 refugee households newly enrolled (August 2025)
- Around 8,700 vulnerable refugee households eligible (cumulative)
- 8,263 households received Tekavoul cash transfers in 2025

Registration & Eligibility

- Around **185,000 refugees** registered in the **national population registry** by December 2025
- Registration enables access to **national social safety nets**

LIVELIHOODS

Employment

- **140+ jobs created** across Mbera, Fassala, Megve, and Bassiknou
- Job opportunities linked to supported income-generating initiatives and seasonal agricultural activities

Capacity Building

- **50 refugees** trained in financial management and entrepreneurship (with Techghil)
- Technical support in sustainable practices, agriculture, and production
- Partner**:** Techghil (National Employment Agency)

Economic inclusion

- ✓ **50** individual and collective initiatives supported
- ✓ **63% women** among supported entrepreneurs
- ✓ **952** refugees and host-community farmers supported in 8 villages
- ✓ **8 hectares** of collective farming in Mbera camp
- ✓ **15 artisans** supported through MADE51, producing **300 items** and accessing markets
- ✓ Joint refugee–host activities strengthening incomes and social cohesion

ENVIRONMENT

Household Energy Access

- **Cash for Gas** expanded to **Néma**
  - ✓ **795 refugee households**
  - ✓ **239 host-community households**
- Pilot LPG green loans via a community-led revolving fund with a microfinance partner

Solarization

- **8 primary schools** & **2 high schools** solarized (lighting, fan, power socket)
- **3 health posts** + 1 main health center upgraded with reliable solar power

Environmental Sustainability

- **5 hectares of agroforestry plots** strengthened
- Improved soil stability and diversified production systems
- Activities led by refugee farmers with **SOS Désert**

WASH

Access & Risks

- Limited safe water access
- Women & girls lead water collection
- Water scarcity affects livestock
- Open defecation & limited sanitation

Sanitation

- 150 latrines emptied
- 60 latrines rehabilitated
- 1,097 improved latrines (ongoing)

Water Infrastructure

- 1 solar-powered borehole
- 300 m^3 elevated tank + 8 km pipelines
- 15 L/person/day water supply
- 1 sludge treatment site

Community Support

- 330 WASH kits distributed
- 10 new SAEP systems
- 10 drinking water supply systems rehabilitated

Livestock Support

- 2 watering points
- 5 m^3 reservoir (Mbera 2)

COORDINATION & IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS

Coordination Mechanism

- **Refugee Coordination Forum:** 39 members (government, UN, humanitarian & development partners)
- Promotes information sharing, resource mobilization, and links emergency response with development

Strategic Planning

- **3RP Mauritania** (2025) to guide refugee response in and out of camp
- **15 partners** across **7 sectors**: protection, WASH, shelter/Non-Food Items, health, livelihoods, education, food security
- **2 cross-cutting groups:** Information Management & Cash Working Group

Coordination Goals

- Ensures complementarity of activities
- Limits duplication
- Strengthens multi-sectoral coordination

SUSTAINABLE RESPONSE

UNHCR continues to advance a sustainable response. In this context, the Government of Mauritania, with the support of UNHCR and other UN agencies, is developing a new holistic approach for 2026–2030 focused on the socio-economic development of Hodh Chargui. During a joint JICA–UNDP–UNHCR thematic side event at the 9th Tokyo International Conference on African Development in August 2025, the President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania presented the concept and outlined this new approach, describing Mbera camp as the country's second-largest city after the capital, Nouakchott. The approach aims to stimulate the local economy, mobilize the private sector, strengthen basic services, and reduce poverty, positioning Mauritania as a model for sustainable responses in the Sahel.

Mauritania is at a pivotal moment in shaping its asylum and protection framework. The draft national asylum law, together with ongoing partnerships and operational efforts, presents a unique opportunity to institutionalize international standards and enhance refugee protection and inclusion. With adequate resources, technical support, and sustained political commitment, Mauritania is well positioned to establish a credible, rights-based asylum system that effectively responds to mixed movements and reinforces its role as a regional leader in refugee protection.

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