

UNHCR MAURITANIA NEWSLETTER

JULY 2022

A safe place to dream

This year's World Refugee Day theme centred on the fundamentals of international refugee protection with the slogan: *Everyone has the right to seek safety.*



Mauritania. World Refugee Day celebrations in Mbera Camp, where almost 80,000 refugees have safe access to food, water, healthcare, education, and the chance to build a bright future. UNHCR/Omar Doukali, 20 June 2022.

World Refugee Day, celebrated each year on 20 June, is a chance to recognize and honour the courage, talents, and aspirations of forcibly displaced people worldwide. In 2022, the total global population of forcibly displaced people, which includes refugees and people displaced inside their own countries, reached an astounding 100 million. Mauritania's refugee population is also rising, including in the Mbera camp in the south-eastern Hodh Chargui region, which today hosts 79,610 Malian refugees. With persistent instability in parts of the Sahel, the number of refugees

seeking safety in Mauritania's major cities is also growing.

As such, UNHCR and partners organized World Refugee Day events around the country, and not only on 20 June but throughout the month. These events were conceptualized and planned together with the refugees, host communities, civil society, UN and NGO partners and government officials. Our aim was to bring refugees together with host communities, and to spotlight the valuable contribution refugees make to the social fabric of Mauritania today.

Football matches brought refugee students face to face with Mauritania's national football league and United Nations Volunteers. In Nouadhibou, more than 2,000 people gathered for a [live concert](#) with the well-known artist Le Baron. In Nouakchott, refugee children explored the world of art at the Gallery D'art, where visitors could also enjoy [Malika Diagana's](#) photo exhibit of [refugee women leaders](#) in Mbera camp. An official ceremony was organized in Bassikounou and in Mbera camp with refugees and host communities, and included the awarding of prizes to refugee pupils who also displayed their artwork, put on a play, and celebrated [with traditional dance and music](#).

For more information about the events, please consult UNHCR Mauritania's [Facebook page](#).

MORE INFO

[\[Global website\]](#) [World refugee day](#)

[\[Social media\]](#) [JR in Mauritania with UNHCR](#)

[\[Video\]](#) [Concert with Le Baron in Nouadhibou](#)

[\[Publication\]](#) [UNHCR report: more than 100 million people forcibly displaced](#)

GENERAL UPDATES

UNHCR **publishes regular updates on the populations it serves in Mauritania**. Check out [our latest Factsheet](#) and [Situation Map](#). UNHCR recently issued a [Country Factsheet on its engagement with development actors](#), which provides more details on what is being done with partners and the Government of Mauritania to facilitate the inclusion of refugees in national services. to further inclusion of refugees in national services.

UNHCR is grateful for the **critical support provided by donors**, which allows us to assist, protect and advance solutions for refugees in Mauritania. For more details on donations, [please visit here](#).

THEMATIC UPDATES

The deteriorating security situation in Mali at the start of the year triggered widespread forced displacement, including an influx into Mauritania of Malian refugees and Mauritians who had settled long-term in the Mauritania-Mali border area. As of July 2022, UNHCR has registered 8,300 new Malian refugees in the Mbera camp. Within this caseload of new arrivals, 58% percent are below the age of 18.

The inter-agency contingency plan was activated in March 2022 to respond to the most urgent protection and assistance needs of the recently arrived Malian refugees, and to reinforce efforts of local authorities in Hodh Chargui. [The Central Emergency Response Fund \(CERF\) allocated USD\\$4 million to UN agencies in Mauritania](#), which included \$1 million for UNHCR's activities focused on registration, protection, shelter, emergency healthcare and WASH.

In the framework of the refugee coordination model (RCM), meetings are organized regularly under the leadership of UNHCR's sub office in Bassikounou to ensure a coherent operational response to humanitarian needs of refugees and host communities. Informal coordination meetings are also convened regularly at national level within the UN country team. Two donor briefings were organized in March and July, with the next one anticipated in September.

Under the joint UNHCR-GIZ ProNexus project and in collaboration with GIZ's Human Rights project "PPDH," UNHCR and GIZ [facilitated a workshop](#) with refugee students and Mauritanian journalists on World Refugee Day. Following an exchange on refugee access to education and employment in Mauritania, the participants identified key communication actions to improve peaceful coexistence and refugee inclusion.

Between 16 and 20 May, UNHCR and the Ministry of Interior [conducted a training on international protection](#) for Mauritanian high-level officials on the front line of the Malian refugee response. The mission took place in the wilaya of Hodh Chargui (Nema) and the wilaya of Hodh Gharbi (Aioun). More trainings are planned for August in Nouadhibou.

UNHCR assisted vulnerable households, students, refugees returning home voluntarily and small and micro entrepreneurs with cash in the 2nd quarter of

2022. A total of 1.5 million USD was distributed to 90,894 people.

other partners are assured through regular exchanges. A shared goal among UNHCR, partners and refugees is to increase enrolment and

AL FAKY TAMASHEK CRAFTSMAN REFUGEE IN NOUAKCHOTT



Mauritania, Nouakchott. ©UNHCR/Omar Doukali, June 2022

A Malian refugee in Nouakchott, [Al Faky](#) grew up in Tombouctou, Mali's ancient cultural centre. Al Faky was taught at a young age how to combine goatskin, metal, silver and agate stone [into unique pieces of art](#). Today, Al Faky is Mauritania's agent for the global brand [MADE51](#), which supports the production of refugee handicrafts worldwide. In this role, Al Faky oversees a local network of Malian artists. *"I did not choose to be a refugee and I'm thankful that I found refuge in Mauritania, a brotherly country. Here I can keep working on my crafts and secure my livelihoods that I inherited from my father's knowledge, and that I want now to pass it on to my children, and my fellow refugees in Mbera and Nouakchott."*

In April 2022, UNHCR and refugees in Mbera camp launched a pilot project to promote the use of Liquefied Petroleum Gas cylinders (LPG). A total of 150 households received cash assistance for the purchase of LPG cylinders as a substitute for wood and charcoal. Additionally, 21 small enterprises operating in the LPG sector were supported. After receiving a safety training on the use of LPG cylinders, 92% of the targeted households purchased and used LPG kits.

In 2021, a census was carried out in Mbera camp to target refugees for their inclusion in Mauritania's national social registry. With the influx that occurred in March and April 2022, UNHCR and WFP – with support from their joint Targeting Hub – developed a new methodology that allows for an ongoing targeting so that recent arrivals can be included in the national social registry after a stabilization period of one year. An appeal process has also been introduced for refugees who experience unanticipated situations of vulnerability. The new targeting methodology is supported by a comprehensive communication strategy.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS UPDATES

Thanks to the generous support of Monaco and ECHO, UNHCR is working with its partner Save the Children to improve the quality of education for refugee children in Mbera camp and in urban areas. Close coordination with UNICEF, UNESCO and

retention of children in schools.

With help from its education experts based in the Regional Office and Headquarters, UNHCR is reviewing and updating its education strategy. Intensive consultations with the refugees alongside the Ministry of Education, local authorities and experts and partners were conducted in June. An updated strategy will be shared for further consultations with key stakeholders, including UNICEF and the Ministry of Education, in September.

Between 20 and 26 June, USA PRM's Deputy Regional Refugee Coordinator for West and North Africa, based in Dakar, Senegal, visited Nouakchott and Mbera camp to gain a deeper understanding of [UNHCR's strategy on inclusion](#). The mission had a particular focus on education, with the feedback benefiting UNHCR's own review of its education strategy and engagement with key partners.

Between 4 and 6 July, a [British Embassy team](#) visited UK funded activities in Bassikounou, including provision of family planning services, cash transfers and those implemented with core support to UN agencies.

REGIONAL UPDATES

The process to end refugee status formally – the application of cessation clauses – for Ivorian refugees came into effect on 30 June,

acknowledging the end of an era of displacement for hundreds of thousands of Ivorian refugees. The cessation of refugee status follows the peaceful resolution of two decades of intermittent civil conflict and political instability in the West African nation. UNHCR Mauritania has so far assisted **40 Ivorians** to return home voluntarily. Another 147 Ivorians will return in August.

On 6 July, UNHCR Mauritania participated in a Deep Dive session that gathered UNHCR and World Bank representatives from the Sahel region. The Deep Dive was chaired by UNHCR's Regional Director for West Africa Millicent Mutuli and the World Bank's Director of Strategy and Operations for the Western and Central Africa Region Elisabeth Huybens. It allowed both organizations to identify policy priorities for the socioeconomic inclusion of

refugees and IDPs in national systems in the Sahel. The Deep Dive was also a chance to highlight best practices at country level and to identify ongoing and new joint initiatives that facilitate access to socioeconomic opportunities for refugees and IDPs. Equally valuable was the chance to identify ways to increase joint analysis and advocacy, including in government efforts to fulfill pledges made at the Global Refugee Forum.

Regional Updates COVID-19

Find UNHCR last updates across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

Covid-19 response: [Year-end report 2021](#)

JR PROJECT IN MBERA REFUGEE CAMP

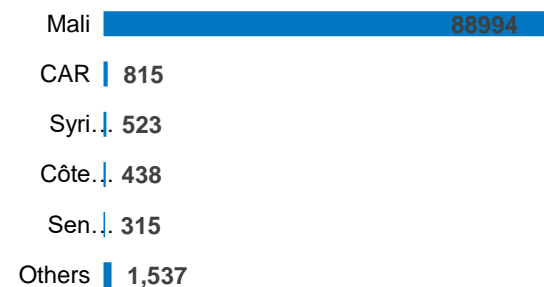


UNHCR welcomed the photographer JR in Mauritania from 16 to 19 May. JR's work with victims of war and persecution led him to collaborate with UNHCR to highlight the daily lives of refugees, especially children, around the world. Prior to coming to Mauritania, JR visited conflict-affected and displaced children in Ukraine and Rwanda. In Mauritania's Mbera camp, JR and his team organized a poster collage (with photos taken by the Mauritanian photographer [Malika Diagana](#)) and giant picnic with hundreds of refugee children. Two giant silhouettes of refugee children living in Mbera camp were photographed by drones. Stay tuned for what is coming next [@JR](#) and [@refugees](#)

Mauritania. Children refugees holding portrait as part of JR project in Mauritania. ©UNHCR/Omar Doukali, May 2022

POPULATION OF CONCERN*

92,691

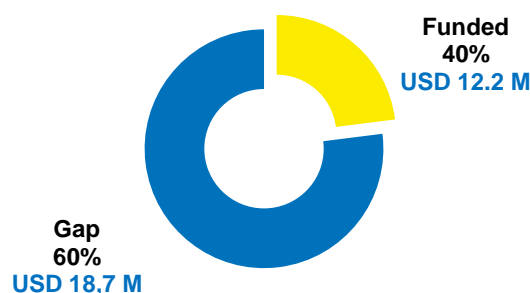


* Refugees and asylum-seekers registered with UNHCR (as of 30 June 2022)

FUNDING (AS OF 30 JULY 2022)

USD 30.9 M

requested for the UNHCR operation in Mauritania





Mauritania. UNHCR/ Omar Doukali, Juin 2022.
UNHCR Representative discovers the series of portraits
of refugee leaders by Malika Diagana in Nouakchott.

“We celebrated this year’s World Refugee Day with a lot of activities that brought refugees together with host communities and shed positive light on the contributions refugees make to Mauritania’s vibrant society. Our focus this year was on art and sport, and we will continue to organize more events throughout the year. I warmly thank everyone who made WRD a success in 2022.”

Elizabeth Eyster, UNHCR Representative, in Mauritania

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