MAURITANIA NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2022

Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow

"When you educate a girl, you educate a nation." Zeinabou, a Malian refugee woman in Mbera camp, is campaigning for girls' education and protection.

Mauritania. Zeinabou and her son. Zeinabou is a Malian refugee who fights for girl's education. © UNHCR/Malika Diagana, 5 of December 2021

For this year's International Women's Day on 8 March: "Equality today for a sustainable tomorrow", and in continuity with the 16 days of Activism, UNHCR shed light on 13 refugee and host community leaders in the *moughataa* of Bassikounou. The spotlight was put on women leaders who protect the environment, fight against early marriage, and keep girls in education. Their portraits were published on various social media channels as part of the digital campaign. Check out their stories and testimonies.

MORE INFO

[Press release] Covid-19 and climate crisis worsen inequalities for displaced women and girls

[Social media] Fatimetou and Hano, refugee environmental activists

[Social media] Zeinabo, Mariama, and Taher fights for girl education

[Social media] Teha and Tiba refugee craftswomen

GENERAL UPDATES

UNHCR published its Strategy in Mauritania 2021-2025. This document, developed in close collaboration with the Mauritanian authorities, presents a summary of the strategic directions of UNHCR, humanitarian and development partners in responding to the needs of the refugee population and its host communities.

UNHCR regularly **publishes key documents about refugees in Mauritania** and the refugee response. Check out our latest Factsheet (February 2022) and Situation map. UNHCR recently published a Country Factsheet on its engagement with Development actors to further inclusion of refugees in national services.

UNHCR is grateful for the **critical support provided by donors** who have contributed to the operation in Mauritania. For more details, please visit here.

THEMATIC UPDATES

On 7 February, UNHCR signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Minister of Interior and Decentralization in Mauritania. This document formalizes UNHCR's temporary role in refugee status determination. The MoU will notably facilitate and accelerate the issuance by UNHCR of refugee documentation in urban areas.

UNHCR and GIZ in close collaboration with the Mauritanian Government are pursuing their work as part of the **"Pro-Nexus" project**. This project aims to **promote socio-inclusion** of refugees, asylum seekers and vulnerable members of host communities in Mauritania. In this framework, 'Pro-Nexus' team has supported the opening of a Techghil Counter (public service for employment and professional training) in Bassikounou, in Hodh Chargui. For more information about this project please check the latest factsheet.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS UPDATES

In early February, the German Ambassador to Mauritania Isabel Hénin visited Bassikounou and Mbera refugee camp alongside the UNHCR Representative and WFP Country Director and Representative. They met with the local authorities, humanitarian, and development partners as well as refugees in and out Mbera camp and the host community. They particularly emphasized women's rights, women's education, mental health and psychosocial support. They also visited activities undertaken through the joint UNHCR-BMZ project ProNexus and other peaceful coexistence activities funded by the German cooperation.

On 22 March, UNHCR released CBI report for 2021 with key results. With CBI UNHCR has supported 36,372 persons in 2021 including refugees and host communities an increase of more than 20,000 people compared to 2020. As CBIs offer flexibility they are a more dignified form of assistance which gives refugees the ability to immediately prioritize and choose what they need. If you want further information, please consult the full report here.

REGIONAL UPDATES

On 14-15 of December, the Government of Mauritania participated in the High-Levels official meetings, held two years after the Global Refugee Forum (GRF). UNHCR interviewed the Mauritanian doctor Ghassoum Wane, who has been working in Mbera camp for almost nine years, about the impact of Mauritania's pledge for the inclusion of refugees in the national health system. Check out the interview to learn more about the implementation of the INAYA government-led program the south-east region of the Hodh Chargui.

On 11 March, the Government of Mauritania participated in the Fragility Forum 2022 organized by the World Bank to present the inclusion of refugees in Mauritania's national social protection Tekavoul program. 6,489 out of the 7,400 refugee households in Mbera included in Tekavoul have received assistance in 2022. Check out the key findings.

Regional Updates (CBI and Covid-19)

Find UNHCR last updates across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.
Covid-19 response: December, January
CBI support: Cash assistance, July-September

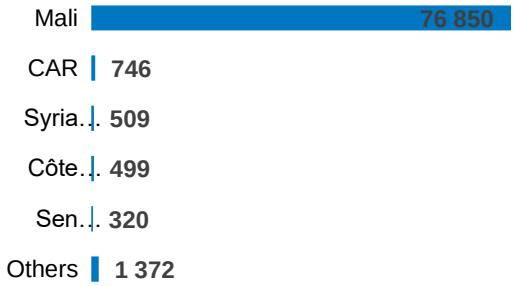
Covid-19 response

Mauritania. UNHCR Staff, refugee community leaders, and health workers in Bassikounou received the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine ©UNHCR/Viola E. Bruttomeso, 21 May 2021

UNHCR supports the Government of Mauritania Covid-19 response and national COVID-19 vaccination plans, which both include refugees. As of March 2022, more than 31,300 **refugees have already been vaccinated in Mbera refugee camp (almost 45% of the total population living in the camp)** during the five nationwide vaccination campaigns conducted since March 2021. The refugees have been actively mobilized alongside the Ministry of Health, local authorities, UNHCR as well as humanitarian and development partners.

POPULATION OF CONCERN*

80,296

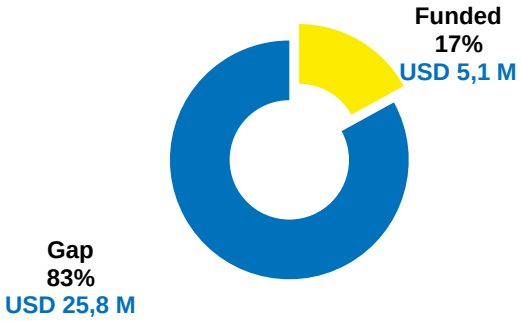


** Refugees and asylum-seekers registered with UNHCR (as of 28 February 2022)*

FUNDING (AS OF 15 FEBRUARY 2022)

USD 30.9 M

requested for the UNHCR operation in Mauritania



Mauritania. Elizabeth Eyster is the new UNHCR representative in Mauritania.

"We have a dynamic, enthusiastic, and diverse team and I want to keep it that way."
Elizabeth Eyster, the new UNHCR Representative, arrived in Mauritania mid-February.

For more information, please contact Josephine Lebas-Joly, Associate External Relations Officer, lebasjol@unhcr.org