

MAURITANIA



UNHCR's presence in 2012	
Number of offices	3
Total staff	51
International staff	12
National staff	33
JPO staff	1
UNVs	5

| Overview |

Operational highlights

- The draft law on asylum approved by the Multisectoral Commission of Laws was transmitted to the Council of Ministers in October 2012 for submission to Parliament in 2013.
- UNHCR's operation in Mauritania underwent drastic changes in 2012 with the influx of Malian refugees fleeing violence in their country. In coordination with the Mauritanian Government, UNHCR set up a refugee camp in Mbera, in the region of Hodh el Charghi, some 60 km from the border. It also established a transit centre in the border village of Fassala and registered and transported the refugees and their belongings to the Mbera Camp.
- The Mbera Camp was equipped with the essential infrastructure and services to host up to 100,000 refugees. UNHCR took the necessary steps to preserve the civilian character of the camp and provide security to refugees and humanitarian staff.
- The year 2012 saw the completion of the voluntary repatriation and reintegration of Mauritanian refugees from Senegal. Nearly 25,000 Mauritanian refugees have been assisted to return home since the operation began in 2008.

People of concern

In 2012, UNHCR's main population of concern in Mauritania were Malian refugees who fled violence in their country.

Partners

- | | |
|---|---|
| Implementing partners | Operational partners |
| Government agencies:
Food Security Commission, Ministry for the Interior and Decentralization | Government agencies:
<i>Agence Nationale de l'Appui et d'Insertion des Réfugiés</i> |
| NGOs:
Actions, <i>Association Mauritanienne des Droits de l'Homme</i> , <i>Association pour la Lutte contre la Pauvreté et le Sous Développement</i> , INTERSOS, <i>Solidarités International</i> , <i>SOS désert</i> , Lutheran World Federation | NGOs:
MSF, OXFAM, Intermon, <i>Action Contre la Faim</i> |
| | Others:
ICRC, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP, UNV. |

Type of Population	Origin	Total	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Per cent female	Per cent under 18
Refugees	Mali	54,000	54,000	55	58
	Various	470	470	43	38
People in a refugee-like situation	<i>Western Sahara</i>	26,000	26,000	-	-
Asylum-seekers	Côte d'Ivoire	480	480	29	19
	Dem. Rep. of the Congo	180	180	41	24
	Various	140	140	21	16
Returnees (refugees)	Senegal	6,200	6,200	55	62
Total		87,470	87,470		

| Report on 2012 results |

Achievements and impact

Favourable protection environment

- UNHCR strengthened the asylum-related capacities of the relevant Mauritanian authorities, in particular the Ministry of the Interior and Decentralization and the security forces, through training sessions on international protection.

Fair protection processes and documentation

- UNHCR continued to carry out refugee status determination for refugees living in urban areas.
- With the completion of individual registration, the Malian refugee population in Mbera Camp totalled some 54,000 at the end of 2012.

Basic needs and essential services

- By the end of 2012, nearly 500 urban refugees were assisted with housing, health and education.
- More than 9,000 family tents and close to 4,000 semi-permanent shelters were set up in Mbera Camp.
- A total of six health posts and 11 nutrition rehabilitation centres were established.
- Five boreholes in the camp provided a total of 1,430 cubic metres of potable water per day, or some 25 litres of water per person per day.
- More than 4,000 latrines were constructed, each serving an average of 17 persons, as well as over 2,200 showers, or one shower for every 26 people.
- Four schools were erected, and some 3,000 children enrolled.
- In addition, environmental-protection activities, including a ban on the collection of dead wood within 100 km of the camp and the provision of energy-saving stoves, were implemented.
- UNHCR and its partners also created and adopted a contingency plan for the potential influx of an additional 100,000 refugees in view of the military intervention in northern Mali.
- The activities implemented by UNHCR and its partners in the areas of shelter, food and non-food items (NFIs), water, sanitation, health, nutrition, education and livelihoods enabled all returnees to settle in safety and dignity in their areas of return.

- The needs of the Malian refugees for shelter, food and NFIs, water, sanitation, health, nutrition and education were addressed, with special attention given to the most vulnerable.

Durable solutions

- There were five new refugee cases identified for resettlement, and six cases were re-submitted. The resettlement requests of 10 refugees were accepted, and four departed for their new homes during the year.
- The Mauritanian returnees from Senegal benefited from UNHCR's reintegration programme in the areas of return, which ran until the end of 2012.

Assessment of results

The protection and assistance activities for the urban refugee population addressed essential needs, in particular for refugees with specific needs. Nevertheless, the impact of the activities was reduced because of the absence of a national asylum system that would guarantee refugee rights in line with international standards.

Some 26,000 Sahrawis are considered to be in a refugee-like situation, but did not approach UNHCR as they are well integrated in Mauritania.

Malian refugees enjoyed a favourable protection environment throughout 2012. The Mauritanian authorities maintained an open-door policy and there were no reports of *refoulement* or of people being turned away from the border. The refugees had access to the assistance provided by UNHCR and other actors involved in the humanitarian response. Nonetheless, given the nomadic and semi-nomadic lifestyle of the refugees, coupled with back and forth movements across the Malian border, UNHCR faced significant challenges in identifying the size of the refugee population in the camp and adjusting humanitarian activities accordingly. Due to the large refugee influx and the shortage of staff, the transition from household registration to individual registration was delayed. The move from food distribution by group (through section chiefs) to distribution by household was effectively in place by the end of 2012.

By the end of 2012, the majority of the Mauritanian returnees from Senegal were living in their villages of return, indicating that a high degree of sustainability had been achieved through UNHCR's return and reintegration programme.

Constraints

Owing to the absence of a national asylum system, UNHCR was not able to ensure the full compliance of administrative practices with international standards for urban refugees. One of the main challenges remained the issuance of documentation, such as birth certificates, work permits and travel documents, to people of concern.

The remote desert location of Mbera Camp, the inadequacy of infrastructure and basic services in the area, and the security risks in the region, rendered the delivery of humanitarian assistance exceptionally challenging.

Unmet needs

- Self-reliance for the urban refugee population could not be fully achieved. Many in this group, particularly individuals with specific needs, remain dependent on the assistance provided by UNHCR.
- The level of funding allocated to the humanitarian response to the Malian refugee situation compelled UNHCR and its partners to give priority to life-saving activities. While most basic needs, including food, water, sanitation and health, were met, some were only partially covered. Standards, in particular for Malian refugees in Mbera Camp, were partially met in the NFIs sector but not fully achieved in nutrition and education.

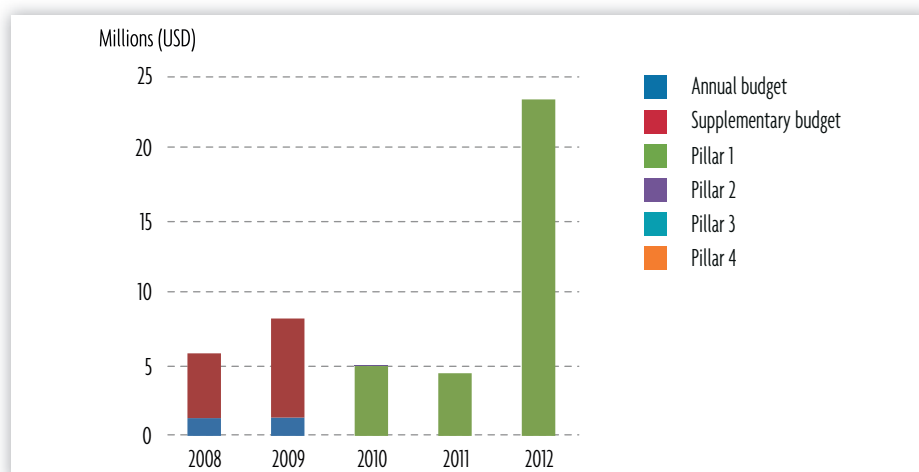
Working with others

UNHCR maintained close working relations with the Ministry of the Interior and Decentralization, the UN Country Team and Humanitarian Country Team, and a range of implementing and operational partners. At the request of the Mauritanian Government, UNHCR coordinated the response to the Malian refugee situation, in close collaboration with its national counterpart and a follow-up committee appointed by the authorities. Regular coordination meetings were held in Nouakchott and Bassikounou with the authorities, UN agencies, NGOs and civil-society partners. Malian refugee committees were also established in Mbera Camp to involve refugees in needs assessments and decision making.

Financial information

Expenditures in Mauritania | 2008 to 2012

The financial requirements for UNHCR's operation in Mauritania amounted to some USD 38 million in 2012, a significant increase from the initial Executive Committee approved budget for 2012 of USD 7.8 million. This was due mainly to the creation of a supplementary budget for the Mali situation, which included USD 30.3 million for programmes to protect and assist Malian refugees in Mauritania. The level of funding available allowed the operation to expend USD 23.4 million.



Budget, income and expenditure in Mauritania | USD

	PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	Total
FINAL BUDGET	38,145,437	38,145,437
Income from contributions ¹	5,895,094	5,895,094
Other funds available / adjustments / transfers	17,532,487	17,532,487
TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE	23,427,581	23,427,581
EXPENDITURE BREAKDOWN		
<i>Favourable Protection Environment</i>		
Law and policy	55,870	55,870
Subtotal	55,870	55,870

	PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	Total
<i>Fair Protection Processes and Documentation</i>		
Registration and profiling	861,811	861,811
Status determination procedures	74,083	74,083
Individual documentation	121,256	121,256
Civil registration and status documentation	41,267	41,267
Subtotal	1,098,417	1,098,417
<i>Security from Violence and Exploitation</i>		
Protection from effects of armed conflict	228,720	228,720
Prevention and response to SGBV	510,643	510,643
Protection of children	34,571	34,571
Subtotal	773,934	773,934
<i>Basic Needs and Essential Services</i>		
Health	669,720	669,720
Nutrition	114,360	114,360
Food security	909,417	909,417
Water	686,698	686,698
Sanitation and hygiene	601,467	601,467
Shelter and infrastructure	8,926,754	8,926,754
Access to energy	540,811	540,811
Basic and domestic items	1,667,920	1,667,920
Education	348,301	348,301
Subtotal	14,465,448	14,465,448
<i>Community Empowerment and Self-Reliance</i>		
Community mobilization	329,877	329,877
Coexistence with local communities	17,286	17,286
Self-reliance and livelihoods	356,486	356,486
Subtotal	703,648	703,648
<i>Durable Solutions</i>		
Voluntary return	227,305	227,305
Reintegration	279,976	279,976
Integration	20,923	20,923
Resettlement	18,537	18,537
Subtotal	546,741	546,741
<i>Leadership, Coordination and Partnerships</i>		
Coordination and partnerships	32,129	32,129
Camp management and coordination	1,144,584	1,144,584
Donor relations and resource mobilization	69,309	69,309
Subtotal	1,246,023	1,246,023
<i>Logistics and Operations Support</i>		
Logistics and supply	1,321,429	1,321,429
Operations management, coordination and support	340,140	340,140
Subtotal	1,661,568	1,661,568
<i>Headquarters and Regional Support</i>		
Protection advice and support	700	700
Technical advice and support to operations	1,357	1,357
Emergency response capacity and effectiveness	114,360	114,360
Subtotal	116,417	116,417
Balance of instalments with implementing partners	2,759,515	2,759,515
Total	23,427,581	23,427,581

*Income from contributions includes indirect support costs that are recovered from contributions to Pillars 3 and 4, supplementary budgets and the “New or additional activities – mandate-related” (NAM) Reserve. Contributions towards all pillars are included under Pillar 1.