

# Mauritania

15 July 2018

Mauritania hosts over **2,000 urban refugees and asylum-seekers** and more than **56,000 Malian refugees** in Mbera camp established in 2012 in the arid south-eastern region close to the Malian border.

Despite the conclusion of a peace agreement in 2015, **large-scale returns of Malian refugees are not expected** due to persistent violence in northern Mali. In June alone, **12 new arrivals** were registered in Mbera camp.

As the situation in northern Mali continues to be unstable, **Mauritania continues to receive Malian refugees** and to support refugees and vulnerable host communities.

## KEY INDICATORS

**5,114**

New arrivals from Mali since January 2018

**No**

Voluntary returns to Mali facilitated in 2018

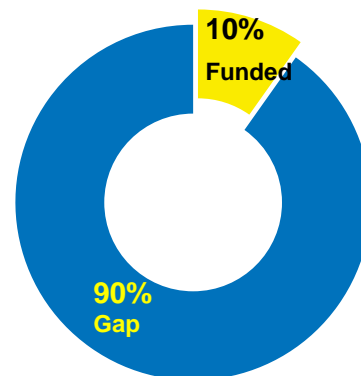
**4,856**

Malian refugees with **specific needs** (as of 30 June 2018)

## FUNDING (AS OF 27 JUNE)

**USD 20.1 M**

**2.1 M** received. **18.4 M** requested for the UNHCR operation in Mauritania



## POPULATION OF CONCERN

Malian refugees in Mbera camp **56,490**

Urban refugees and asylum seekers **2,433**

A total of **58,923** people are assisted by UNHCR in Mauritania.



UNHCR Protection office in Mbera camp. © UNHCR/Helena Pes

## Operational Context

In Mauritania, UNHCR provides protection and assistance to **56,490 Malian refugees** in **Mbera camp** in south-eastern Mauritania and to **1,597 urban refugees and 836 asylum-seekers** (mainly from the Central African Republic, Syria and Côte d'Ivoire) in Nouakchott and Nouadhibou.

UNHCR works closely with the Mauritanian authorities towards the **development and implementation of a national asylum system**. Pending the adoption of the asylum law, UNHCR supports the authorities to enhance refugee protection in Mauritania improving access to documentation, birth registration, economic opportunities, and basic services such as health and education.

Since 2012, UNHCR has led the **humanitarian response for Malian refugees** in the Hodh Echarghi region, in collaboration with the Mauritanian Government and other UN agencies, national and international NGOs. Mauritania continues to keep its borders open to new influxes. Despite the conclusion of a peace agreement in Mali in June 2015, large-scale returns of refugees are not yet expected due to the prevailing security situation in northern Mali. In June 2016, Mauritania, Mali and UNHCR concluded a Tripartite Agreement for the voluntary repatriation of Malian refugees. This agreement provides a framework to facilitate voluntary return, when the conditions in Mali allow. In the meantime, it reaffirms the commitment of Mauritania and Mali to protect refugees. At present, UNHCR considers that the conditions in Mali are not conducive to promote the return of refugees. However, UNHCR may facilitate voluntary return upon request and on an individual case basis.

## World Refugee Day 2018

On the occasion of World Refugee Day, UNHCR Mauritania held commemorations in Mbera camp and in the cities of Nouakchott and Nouadhibou. On 18 June, UNHCR, in collaboration with the French Institute in Mauritania, held its **kick-off event** for World Refugee Day in Nouakchott with a **movie-debate**. On 20 June, UNHCR and its local partner ALPD organized a series of **community activities** in Nouakchott and Nouadhibou, and a **Malian refugee band performed** in the evening at the French Institute of Nouakchott. On the same day, UNHCR in Bassikounou commemorated World Refugee Day in Mbera camp. The closing event was hosted by the University of Nouakchott where UNHCR organized a movie projection followed by a debate with students at the Faculty of Law and Economics.



*The Taflist, a refugee band from Mbera camp, performing in Noakchott during the celebrations for the Word Refugee Day. © UNHCR/Viola E. Bruttomesso*



*Celebrations of the World Refugee Day in Mbera camp. © UNHCR*

## Achievements



### PROTECTION

#### Achievements and Impact

Refugees and asylum-seekers continue to seek safety in Mbera camp. **Twelve refugees** were newly registered in the month of June alone.

During the month of June, **nine new persons with specific needs** (PwSN) were identified at the registration centre in Mbera camp. Following the results of the home visits performed in May, UNHCR provided assistance to **290 PwSN**. In addition to this, **158 people with disabilities** (PwD) were provided with cash assistance, non-food items (NFIs), food assistance and medical devices such as crutches.

During the month of June, **21 babies were born in** in Mbera Camp. UNHCR and its partner the *Lutheran World Federation* (LWF) kept raising awareness among heads of households on the importance of **birth certificates for refugee children** born in Mauritania.

As part of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) prevention and response activities in Mbera camp, during the month of June, UNHCR undertook **40 home visits** to assess the situation of 37 old cases and identified 3 new cases.

In the urban context, during the month of June, UNHCR registered **75 new asylum-seekers** from Central African Republic (14) and from Sierra Leone (39). The office in Nouadhibou conducted meetings with key actors including local authorities, local NGOs and civil society representatives and finalized the mapping of all interventions related to mixed migration flows and prepared the joint profiling exercise with IOM. UNHCR identified **130 PwSN** and assisted them with regular cash assistance, in addition to the **30 PwSN** who were assisted with exceptional cash assistance.

#### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

SGBV and child protection referral mechanisms are limited in Mauritania, preventing a comprehensive protection response. UNHCR is looking for partners to reinforce referral and protection pathways and advocate for the inclusion of refugees in all national protection mechanisms.



### EDUCATION

#### Achievements and Impact

In April **5,880 students** (2,914 boys and 2,966 girls) were enrolled in the six primary schools in Mbera camp. In June 2018, the average attendance rate was **4,120 students** (2,060 boys and 2,060 girls).

In urban areas, UNHCR is supporting **298 children** to access primary education and **173** to attend secondary school. **All refugee students** have registered to take national exams in June.

In Mbera camp, UNHCR and Intersos continue to carry out adults' literacy courses in the main four languages of the camp (Tamashek, Arabic, Songhai and Fula). In June, **255 students** (199 women and 66 men) took the final exam.



*Children answering their teacher in one of the six schools in Mbera camp © UNHCR/José Manuel Cáceres*

**HEALTH****Achievements and Impact**

**Twenty six patients** from Mbera camp were referred to Kiffa, Nema and Nouakchott hospitals. **Twelve refugees** were provided cash support to cover medical needs. UNHCR and its partner, the *Lutheran World Federation* (LWF) ensure medical evacuations for secondary and tertiary medical cases of refugees and host community patients who cannot be treated in the camp or in Bassikounou. In addition, **274 urban refugees** received health assistance including check-ups, medical visits and surgeries.

**Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps**

Following the announcement of the departure of the main health actor in Mbera camp, *Médecins sans Frontières* (MSF), UNHCR has engaged in advocacy efforts with the Ministry of Health, Unicef and WHO to ensure the provision of basic health services is maintained in Mbera camp from October 2018. As part of these efforts, the Mauritanian Government has expressed its commitment to expand its role in the health sector in the area. Mauritania will need both financial and technical support to take over these activities.

**FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION****Achievements and Impact**

In June, UNHCR in partnership with the World Food Programme (WFP) distributed **rice** (6.6 kg per person per month) and **cash** (190 MRU per person per month) to **more than 55,000 refugees** (14631 families).

**Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps**

Refugees in Mbera camp are dependent on food assistance due to very scarce local resources. UNHCR works with partners to improve access to gardening fields and livestock to reduce refugees' dependency on food assistance. Development interventions are needed in the Hodh Echargui region to help both refugee and host communities become more resilient.



Refugee woman working in her garden nearby Mbera camp © UNHCR/Helena Pes

**WATER AND SANITATION****Achievements and Impact**

UNHCR and its partner *Action contre la Faim* (ACF) ensure that all refugees in the camp have access to clean water and sanitation facilities, including latrines. In June, more than **18 litres per person per day** were available for refugees in Mbera Camp. According to the monitoring made during the month of June, **1943 latrines** are operational in the camp (a ratio of 29 persons per latrine).

**Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps**

The water system in the camp is still dependent on humanitarian assistance. An initial investment is needed to ensure a smooth transition from emergency to more durable and sustainable water systems in Mbera camp and its surroundings. These investments are crucial given the current drought risk.

**SHELTER AND NFIS****Achievements and Impact**

UNHCR provided blankets to **61 new-borns** (34 girls and 27 boys), and hygiene kits to **61 breastfeeding** women. In addition, UNHCR also provided blankets to **18 PwSN**. During the reporting period, UNHCR distributed **138 shelter kits** and facilitated the construction of shelter for PwSN.

**COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND SELF RELIANCE****Achievements and Impact**

In collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO), UNHCR funded scholarships for **10 young refugees** who finished in June a seven-month Certificate of Proficiency program training in **renewable energies and construction of earth bricks**. The courses have been held from in the cities of Nouakchott, Selibabi and Kaedi and final exams will take place in Nouakchott in mid-July.

**DURABLE SOLUTIONS****Achievements and Impact**

Following an urgent resettlement submission in March 2018, **one refugee** departed to Sweden. So far in 2018, **10 refugees** have departed on resettlement.

**Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps**

There is a considerable number of refugees in need for resettlement in Mauritania. UNHCR continues to identify persons in need of resettlement and conducts advocacy with the support of the Regional Bureau to process cases.

## Working in partnership

At the request of the Mauritanian Government, UNHCR coordinates the humanitarian response to the Malian refugee situation in close collaboration with the Ministry of Interior and Decentralization and local authorities. UNHCR also participates in the United Nations Country Team and Humanitarian Country Team and works closely with national and international NGOs.

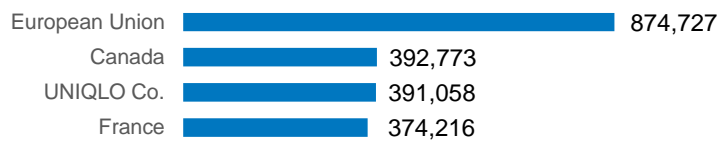
UNHCR, jointly with the Mauritanian Government, representatives of UN agencies and international NGOs signed the 2018-2022 United Nations' Sustainable Development Partnership Framework (CPDD), which integrates humanitarian and development interventions and includes a strategy to strengthen peaceful coexistence and self-reliance for refugees and host communities in Mauritania's border areas.

## Financial Information

UNHCR is grateful for the support provided by donors who have contributed to this operation. UNHCR also express gratitude especially towards those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with un-earmarked and broadly earmarked funds.

### EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

Earmarked contributions for the operation **amount** to some **US\$ 2.1 million**.



### BROADLY EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

Germany 46.6 million | Private donors Australia 6.3 million | United States of America 6.1 million | Denmark 5.7 million | Sweden 4.4 million | Finland 4.3 million | Norway 3.2 million | Private donors Switzerland 2.8 million | Private donors Republic of Korea 2 million

Iceland | Italy | Romania | Private donors

### UNEARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

Sweden 98.2 million | Norway 42.5 million | Netherlands 39.1 million | Private donors Spain 32.9 million | United Kingdom 31.7 million | Denmark 25.5 million | Australia 18.9 million | Private donors Republic of Korea 15.8 million | Switzerland 15.2 million | France 14 million | Italy 11.2 million

Algeria | Argentina | Belgium | Bosnia and Herzegovina | Canada | China | Costa Rica | Estonia | Finland | Germany | Iceland | India | Indonesia | Kuwait | Lithuania | Luxembourg | Monaco | Montenegro | New Zealand | Philippines | Qatar | Republic of Korea | Russian Federation | Saudi Arabia | Serbia | Singapore | Slovakia | Sri Lanka | Thailand | Turkey | United Arab Emirates | Uruguay | Private donors

## External / Donor Relations

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### LINKS



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Stories

# Annex

## Breakdown of the main refugee groups in Mauritania

