

# MAURITANIA

October 2019

UNHCR provides protection and assistance to some **56,000 Malian refugees** in the arid south-east region where Mbera refugee camp was established in 2012.

UNHCR protects and assists some **2,800 urban refugees and asylum-seekers** in the cities of Nouakchott and Nouadhibou, mostly from Mali, Central Africa, Syria and Côte d'Ivoire.

The security situation in Mali is still volatile and largescale returns are not expected. UNHCR is **engaging with development actors** to move away from the traditional care and maintenance approach.

## POPULATION OF CONCERN\*

**58,932**

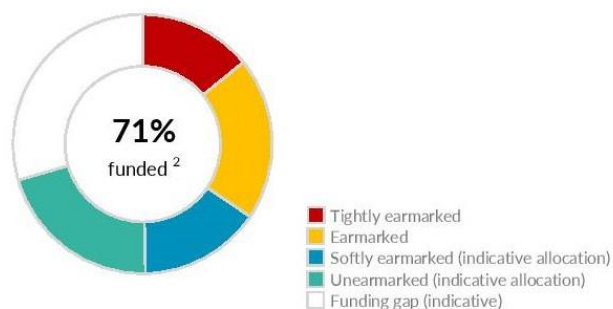


\* Refugees and asylum-seekers registered with UNHCR (as of 31 August 2019)

## FUNDING (AS OF 2 OCTOBER)

**USD 19.3 M**

**requested** for the UNHCR operation in Mauritania, 13M received



## UNHCR PRESENCE

### Staff:

**52** National staff  
**16** International staff

### Offices in Mauritania:

**1** Branch office located in Nouakchott  
**1** Sub office in Bassikounou  
**1** Field unit in Nouadhibou



## Working with Partners

- At the request of the Mauritanian Government, **UNHCR coordinates the humanitarian response for the Malian refugee situation in close collaboration with the Ministry of Interior and Decentralization, other line ministries 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 participates in the 2018-2022 United Nations' Sustainable Development Partnership Framework (CPDD),** jointly signed with the Mauritanian Government, representatives of other United Nations agencies and international NGOs, which integrates humanitarian and development interventions.

## Main Activities

### Protection

- **In Mbera camp, UNHCR maintains and updates a refugee biometric registration database, provides tailored assistance to people with specific needs through home visits, psychosocial counselling, and support for people with disabilities.** It carries out awareness-raising activities, training and response to gender-based violence, as well as child protection. Malian refugees registered in Mbera are recognized as *prima facie* refugees. The authorities also register refugees in the State biometric database. Furthermore, Mauritania has started issuing birth certificates to refugee children born in the country and ID cards to all Malian refugees in Mbera camp. In 2019, in coordination with the government, UNHCR launched registration for Malian refugees residing outside Mbera camp, in the region of Bassikounou. In June, out-of-camp registration was extended to Nouakchott.
- **In urban areas, UNHCR carries out registration of asylum-seekers and determination of refugee status within a context of mixed population movements.** UNHCR also organizes refugee protection trainings for government officials (including police and military officers) and is advocating for the adoption of a national asylum law. In Nouadhibou, UNHCR conducted a survey of refugee and migrant populations in the city to better understand protection needs and prioritize programmatic interventions, as well as coordination and referral. The survey identified potentially 1,300 Malian refugees in the city, for whom registration is expected to follow later this year.

### Education

- **In Mbera camp, UNHCR supports primary education with the payment of stipends for school staff, the maintenance of school infrastructure and awareness-raising activities to promote education for all.** UNHCR also offers literacy and numeracy classes for approximately 200 adults.
- **In urban areas, UNHCR helps some 500 refugee children access primary and secondary education by covering tuition fees, providing school kits and offering tutoring.** To facilitate access to education at all levels, for the 2019-2020 school year, UNHCR will adopt a "cash for education" approach to cover tuition fees of refugee children in urban areas.
- **UNHCR also supports more than 100 refugees with scholarships to attend university** in Nouakchott and advocates for the enhancement of access to higher education for refugees.

### Health

- **In Mbera camp, UNHCR supports primary healthcare for both the refugee and host populations, with the supply of medical equipment and medicine to the camp's health centre.** Medical evacuations to Nema, Kiffa and Nouakchott hospitals are provided to both refugee and host community members with serious medical conditions, when treatment is unavailable in Mbera camp or Bassikounou. A gradual transition is underway for the inclusion of refugees in the national health system.
- **In urban areas, UNHCR facilitates access to the primary national healthcare system for all refugees and vulnerable asylum-seekers,** as well as secondary and tertiary and emergency healthcare if needed.

### Food Security and Nutrition

- **In Mbera camp, UNHCR facilitates monthly food and cash distributions provided by the World Food Programme (WFP).** The introduction of the Global Distribution Tool (GDT) has enabled UNHCR to enhance its distribution tracking and verification processes, as well as the protection of children who often collect food rations on behalf of their families. **In April 2019, WFP and UNHCR introduced the first phase of targeted food assistance to Malian refugees.**
- **In urban areas, refugees living with specific needs benefit once a year from a special multipurpose cash** to cover their nutritional and other basic needs.

## Water and Sanitation

- **In Mbera camp, UNHCR ensures maintenance and optimization of the existing water system**, construction and rehabilitation of semi-permanent latrines and the collection, transport and treatment of solid waste. UNHCR supports hygiene awareness-raising activities to prevent the spread of water-borne diseases.

## Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFIs)

- **In Mbera camp, UNHCR ensures the replacement of basic household items (jerry cans, mosquito nets) and distribution of shelters as well as the maintenance of infrastructure and roads.** UNHCR also ensures the distribution of hygiene kits for all refugees, with specific sanitary hygiene kits for women of childbearing age.

## Peaceful Coexistence and Self-Reliance

- **In line with the Global Compact on Refugees** that encourages states and stakeholders to foster inclusive economic growth for host communities and refugees, **UNHCR and its partners are undertaking a number of activities aimed at improving livelihoods of refugees in Mbera camp, as well as in the host communities.** These include income-generating activities, cultivation of market gardens benefitting 1,800 persons and on-the-job training benefitting 200 persons from the refugee youth community and host community members
- **UNHCR supports community-based initiatives, such as committees composed of representatives from the refugee and host communities, and promotes peaceful coexistence with socio-cultural and focus groups activities.** UNHCR also supports quick-impact projects targeting the host population around Mbera camp, which include interventions to improve access to water and livestock activities.
- **In urban areas, UNHCR facilitates access to micro-credit schemes and promotes certified vocational training.**

## Durable Solutions

- **UNHCR facilitates the voluntary repatriation of refugees willing to go back to their country of origin, following counselling on conditions in the areas of return.** In line with the agreement signed by UNHCR, Mali and Mauritania, UNHCR also facilitates the implementation of a tripartite framework on voluntary repatriation of Malian refugees. However, given the situation in Mali, it is unlikely that largescale returns will take place.
- **UNHCR promotes resettlement as a protection tool for the most vulnerable cases.**

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