

Annual Results Report

2023

Mauritania

Acknowledgements

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- 4.1 - Lessons Learned and Future Outlook

Section 1: Context and Overview

1.1 Changes to the Operational Context

Since 2012, the Government of Mauritania (GoM) has maintained its generous open-door policy towards refugees and asylum-seekers. In the absence of a national asylum system, UNHCR conducts registration and mandate refugee status determination (RSD) in urban areas alongside other protection activities. Recognized refugees are referred to the national civil registry (ANRPTS) for enrolment with national authorities.

By the end of 2023, Mauritania hosted around 178,000 refugees and asylum-seekers across urban and rural areas. Registered refugees and asylum-seekers reached almost 18,000 in Nouakchott and Nouadhibou (up from 15,700 at end-2022), 96,000 in Mbera camp (up from 93,000) and 9,000 in different villages in Hodh Chargui (up from 8,000). In addition to those, UNHCR estimates that 55,000 Malians (14,000 in the camp; 41,000 out of camp) and 8,000 Mauritanian returnees who had settled in Mali crossed the border in 2023, due to the deterioration of the security situation in Mali.

Most new arrivals are in urgent need of protection and access to basic services, as they have directly experienced trauma and violence in their villages. Many also brought with them livestock populations, inducing further pressure on the region's natural resources in a region which already faces scarcity of resources, particularly water, and high levels of multidimensional poverty (78 percent).

Anticipating this influx, UNHCR, together with 24 partners, elaborated an inter-agency contingency plan in October 2023 to effectively respond to the needs of new arrivals. With almost 4,000 new arrivals in December 2023, the plan was activated, and UNHCR declared an emergency level 1 in February 2024. Alongside responding to emergency needs in Mbera camp, UNHCR's out of camp response is being coordinated through the Refugee Coordination Model and linked with mid- to long-term resilience and development programmes in Hodh Chargui to ensure refugee and host communities continue to live peacefully together.

In parallel to responding to the new influx, UNHCR has continued to widen the protection space for refugees in and outside of the camp by supporting government efforts to include refugees in national systems, including through the explicit inclusion of refugees in the National Plan for Development in the Education Sector. Furthermore, UNHCR has been supporting the government in updating its social registry databases to ensure new arrivals are included in the national social safety net, "Tekavoul".

UNHCR also supported a government-led campaign to enroll all nationals, including undocumented Mauritanian returnees from Senegal at risk of statelessness. By the end of 2023 it is estimated that some 500,000 people had been enrolled through the exercise. This activity was critical to addressing statelessness risks in Mauritania, particularly for populations living in isolated and remote areas.

These efforts are also aligned with the pledges made by the GoM at the Global Refugee Forum in December 2023 in the sectors of health, labour, documentation, asylum law, education, social protection and transforming Mbera camp into a climate-adapted human settlement. With no foreseeable end in sight for the conflict in Mali, UNHCR continues to work with national, regional, and local authorities to support Malian refugees in Mauritania.

1.2. Progress Against the Desired Impact

1. Impact Area: Attaining Favorable Protection Environments

By 2023, refugees and asylum seekers benefit from a favorable protection environment, with facilitation of access to registration and protection services

Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Actual (2023)
1.1 Proportion of people seeking international protection who are able to access asylum procedures	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	85.00%	55.90%
1.2 Proportion of people who are able to move freely within the country of habitual residence	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%

Among the new arrivals, some people are waiting to register in urban areas and at the Mbera camp due to capacity constraints (e.g., long registration times).

Despite not having a national asylum law, Mauritania has historically provided a relatively favorable protection environment for those fleeing violence and persecution. Throughout the reporting period, refugees, and asylum-seekers (100 percent) in vast majority of the time benefited from a favorable protection environment, being able to access registration and protection services both in urban and rural settings. The exception, as noted below, being those disembarked and/or intercepted at sea not being systematically screening by UNHCR for identification of potential international protection needs.

Throughout 2023, Malians fled the north and centre regions due to the prevailing insecurity in the country. According to estimates from multi-sector assessments carried out by humanitarian actors and government departments, 71301 civilians have gained access to Mauritanian territory, where they are living in complete safety.

All refugees (100 percent) can move freely throughout Mauritania and access the public and private services while in possession of the refugee certificates issued by UNHCR. However, these documents are sometimes not acknowledged by security officers and refugees traveling between regions face harassment even though they hold valid refugee certificates. Defense and security agents have been sensitized and trained by UNHCR and National Advisory Commission on Refugees and Persons in Need of Protection (CNCRPP) to promote the principles of protection and limit police harassment.

2. Impact Area: Realizing Rights in Safe Environments

By 2023, more refugees and asylum seekers have access to cash, improved shelter, WASH and Healthcare services.

Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Actual (2023)
2.2 Proportion of people residing in physically safe and secure settlements with access to basic facilities	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	89.00%	89.00%
2.3 Proportion of people with access to health services	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	95.68%	97.00%

No data on the poverty level of refugees and asylum seekers. However, the Report multidimensional poverty Index optimization study for Mauritania (UN-ANSADE, 2023) shows proportion of poverty in Hold chargui, is around 57.9 percent, Nouakchott (48.7 percent), Nouadhibou (47.5 percent). The refugees and asylum seekers are not included in this study.

The Result monitoring survey 2022 survey revealed that 95 percent of refugees and asylum seekers live in houses and tents in urban areas and in the camp. Almost all refugees had access to public and private hospitals in the camp and in urban areas, and over half of them travelled less than 30 minutes to hospitals and clinics for medical care. However, almost all households reported that the food or drink consumed by household members was not cooked or prepared in the household dwelling using a stove, oven, fire or other cooking appliance. More than half used the electricity source most of the time in the household were 'Solar lantern, Rechargeable battery, Dry cell / torch. More than half the households used the main source of drinking water used by members came from a tap in the plot concession or a public tap/fountain stand. Healthcare for refugees in Mbera camp is assured through third party payments (INAYA project funded by the World Bank) during the transition to inclusion in national healthcare services (SDG 3 on good health and wellbeing). UNHCR and its partner successfully ensured basic medical care, including secondary and tertiary healthcare, preventive healthcare through vaccinations against measles, BCG, and response to peak in morbidity and emergencies, particularly the influx of refugees in Hodh Chargui region.

Urban refugees have continued benefiting from health services under same entitlements as the local population thanks to the collaboration between UNHCR's partner and medical centres and hospitals in Nouakchott and Nouadhibou. During 2023, forcibly displaced people could also benefit from obstetric care. It is worth mentioning that during the reporting period refugees benefited from close to 214,000 medical consultations.

Almost all households have access to drinking water in Mbera Camp. In terms of sanitation, 127 latrines were rehabilitated, with 150 undergoing emptying operations to increase the number of functional latrines in the camp. The average ratio is 30 people per latrine due to the high presence of new arrivals in the camp. Cash assistance continues to be critical for the well-being of displaced people in Mauritania. In 2023, Mauritania operation provided \$ 1,851,679 of cash assistance to 86,918 people in Bassiknou (Mbera camp), Nouakchott and Nouadibhou. Operation continues to use cash for a wide range of purposes, including protection, basic needs, education, shelter, and livelihoods.

During the period under review, 215 tents were distributed to new arrivals. Additionally, 305 vulnerable households benefited from shelter material while 941 vulnerable households received cash for shelter, thus improving their housing conditions.

3. Impact Area: Empowering Communities and Achieving Gender Equality

By 2023, more refugees and asylum seekers will benefit from livelihoods opportunities, access to education and community empowerment initiatives

Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Actual (2023)
3.1 Proportion of people who have the right to decent work	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
3.2a Proportion of children and young people enrolled in primary education	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	36.57%	34.30%
3.2b Proportion of children and young people enrolled in secondary education	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	10.77%	7.04%
3.3 Proportion of people feeling safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	74.00%	74.20%

In line with its international commitments, notably those made at the 2019 and 2023 World Refugee Forum, Mauritania accords Malian refugees the same treatment as nationals in terms of access to the labor market. Even though access to employment is limited for Mauritians and refugees alike, there are no legal obstacles to refugees working in Mauritania as long as they have a national identification number (NNI).

In accordance with Decree n° 2022-063 (5 May 2022) the beneficiary of refugee status or the status of person in need of protection are treated in the same way as foreign nationals.

Regarding education, in the Mberra camp, pupils continue to follow the Malian program in French, with a considerable increase in Arabic language courses to facilitate integration. The eight elementary schools and two secondary schools continued to welcome pupils, while the preschool program was interrupted in

October 2023 due to lack of funding. Stakeholders are continuing to explore ways of ensuring the continuation of this important activity, which prepares 5-year-old children for primary school. This component was supported by UNICEF and partners. The educational staff in Mbera camp schools is made up of 274 staff, 255 of whom are primary school teachers, professors, and animators, ten directors, nine deputies and two pedagogical advisors, most of whom are refugees, with a few nationals supporting the teaching of Arabic. In 2023, UNHCR has paid the salaries of primary school staff, including guards and pedagogical advisors at the Education inspection section (EDEN).

At the end of the 2023 school year, 5,770 pupils (2,860 boys and 2,910 girls) were enrolled in elementary school, with girls accounting for 50.41% percent. The school feeding program ran steadily with the support of WFP and UNHCR throughout 2023, providing a daily meal to all primary and pre-school children, numbering 1,100 (503 boys and 597 girls). Assistance stopped in July 2023, when funding for this activity ended.

The secondary school program in the camp welcomed 690 pupils (441 boys and 249 girls), some of whom are candidates for the Diploma of Fundamental Studies (DEF) and baccalaureate (BAC) exams. There has been a marked improvement in pupil retention, especially among students, who make up 36 percent of the total.

The literacy program for young people and adults continued in 2023, thanks to the efforts of several actors. UNHCR supports the program for adults in the camp and surrounding villages while other partners support the literacy program for young people. A total of 814 learners, including 642 women, have benefited from these programs, under the supervision of the education authority in terms of training, monitoring and evaluation in the field. The programs are essentially in Arabic and French, enabling learners to develop skills that will facilitate their integration into working life in Mauritania.

The connectivity centre has received visits from 1,560 people from both inside and outside the camp who have benefited from the structure's services, in terms of IT training, online capacity building via coursera or course preparation for teachers.

4. Impact Area: Securing Solutions

By 2023, more refugees and asylum seekers have access to durable solutions and/or attained social inclusion

Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Actual (2023)
4.1 Number of refugees who voluntarily return in safety and dignity to their country of origin	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	3,540	3
4.2a Number of people who departed on resettlement	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	35	102
4.2b Number of people who departed through complementary pathways	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0	2
4.3a Number of stateless people for whom nationality is granted or confirmed	Stateless Persons	Unknown	0

UNHCR continued to pursue the traditional durable solutions with resettlement playing a key part as a protection tool for a wide number of refugees. In this regard, 108 individuals were submitted for resettlement mainly to the US, with Canada and the Netherlands also receiving submission from Mauritania operation in 2023. Furthermore, a record number of 102 individuals departed for resettlement in 2023, providing a lasting durable solution to individuals with either serious health conditions and/or those facing physical and legal protection needs in Mauritania.

UNHCR also contributed for conditions to be conducive to safe and dignified voluntary return whenever possible.

Having said that, over 80 percent of refugees in Mauritania are from Mali which has been facing widespread violence in the North and South of the country and political instability countrywide. Nationals from Burkina Faso, Niger, Central African Republic, Syria and Guinea are also among the growing number of asylum

seekers population in Mauritania. Considering the prevailing instability in those countries, there is very little appetite for voluntary repatriation among its population in Mauritania and the operation does not promote volRep to any of these countries at present.

As such, 2023 has seen only three voluntary repatriation taking place (2 to Somali and one to Erbil Iraq) while counselling on voluntary return options has been provided on an adhoc basis to individuals or families from Mali, Central African Republic who very often sought information on volrep due to health condition. In 2024 and the foreseeable future, the political landscape and security situation is not predicted to improve in Sahel region and in other countries whose nationals are people of concern to UNHCR in Mauritania, thus voluntary repatriation activities in the operation would remain very limited consequently.

Although not stated in law, feedback received from Mauritanian authorities is that residence cards are incompatible with refugee Cards issued by UNHCR. Meaning that those who are recognized as refugees should not in theory, according to the authorities, apply for nor obtain residence card. As such, we do not have data on refugees for whom residency status is granted or confirmed.

1.3 Challenges to Achieving Impacts

As a signatory to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol and the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, Mauritania has still not yet passed a national asylum law despite the pledge made to this effect since the 2019 Global Refugee Forum (GRF). UNHCR continued to advocate for the development and implementation of a comprehensive asylum law that would allow the Government to assume full responsibility for refugee protection. Increased raids and arrest, detention and expulsion of undocumented foreigners negatively impacted access to asylum for undocumented asylum-seekers, especially in urban areas of Nouakchott and Nouadhibou.

Since September 2023, disembarkation standard operational procedures (SOPs) have been disregarded by the authorities in Nouadhibou, and UNHCR has only had sporadic access to those disembarked in order to identify those with international protection needs prior to transfer to Nouakchott and removal from the country. People identified with international protection needs are automatically transferred to Nouakchott where UNHCR and its legal partner advocate for their release. Since 2022, UNHCR has not been able to conduct screening in Nouakchott, despite continued advocacy.

Due to the suspension of activities at Douenkera border, there was a backlog of cases to be registered in Mbera camp. In the urban area, there is also a backlog of people waiting registration as the number of cases exceed the processing UNHCR staffing capacity for registration, documentation and refugee status determination. Furthermore, a significant number of births take place outside of formal health facilities, thus delaying or, in some cases preventing, the attainment of key documents for obtaining birth certificates.

The 2022 memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed between UNHCR, and the Ministry of Interior and Decentralization included clauses relating to the facilitation and acceleration of the issuance of identification cards for refugees in urban areas. However, despite the signing of the MoU, identification cards have not been issued to urban refugees due to limited capacity of the National Agency of Populations and Secured Titles (Agence Nationale du Registre des populations et des Titres Sécurisés, ANRPTS).

The current challenge is to maintain it systematically and continuously, given the limitations and weaknesses of the Agence Nationale du Registre des Populations et des Titres Sécurisés (ANRPTS), which lacks the human, material, and logistical resources to effectively conduct the enrolment of populations, including new arrivals .

In addition, considering the increasing number of forcibly displaced and stateless people seeking international protection, the need for greater access to durable solutions including through complementary pathways is becoming important.

Some forcibly displaced and stateless people face a risk of arrest, arbitrary detention and refoulement, with LGBTI refugees being at heightened risk of discrimination and legal and physical protection risks. With a growing number of refugees with acute protection needs, resettlement is the only viable long-term solution, but limited quotas remain a constraint.

In 2023, healthcare expenditures exceeded the planned resources due to the increasing number of new arrivals and misuse of healthcare services by refugees in the camps due to their free nature. As a lesson learned, and in order to optimize resources, UNHCR, in collaboration with partners and with the involvement of community leaders, will initiate contributions from refugees in category 3 (refugees assessed with less

vulnerability compared to categories 1 and 2, which are the most vulnerable).

1.4 Collaboration and Partnerships

In 2023, to implement its strategy effectively and achieve favorable outcomes, UNHCR relied on 15 partnerships, including:

Six governmental entities: National Agency for Population and Secure Titles Registry (ANRPTS), Agence Nationale pour Emploi, TECHGHIL, Cellule de Coordination HEC, Commissariat a la Sécurité Alimentaire (CSA), Delegation Solidarite National, TAAZOUR, and the Ministry of Interior.

Three International NGOs: Croix Rouge Française (CRF), Accion contra El Hambre (Spain), and Save the Children.

Five national NGOs: El Insaniya, S.O.S Desert, Association de Lutte contre la Pauvreté et le Sous-Développement (ALPD), Association des Femmes Chefs (AFCF), and ONG ACTIONS.

One UN Agency: Institut International de Planification (UNESCO).

The Central Sahel region witnessed a significant deterioration in 2023, resulting in a severe humanitarian and protection crisis. Record internal and cross-border displacements ensued due to violence perpetrated by extremist groups, military operations, and communal clashes. Since December 2023, over 54,000 new arrivals sought asylum in Mali and Niger. Burkina Faso experienced a surge of 400,000 forcibly displaced people in the past six months. Additionally, Mauritania received 55,000 new arrivals from Mali and 8,000 Mauritanian returnees in 2023.

During this tumultuous period, UNHCR continued to lead the refugee response in Mauritania, adhering to the refugee coordination model (RCM) principles. Collaboration with Ministry of Interior and Decentralization (Ministère de l'Intérieur et de la Décentralisation MIDECE), local authorities, UN agencies, and NGOs remained integral. Sectoral coordination meetings were conducted regularly to share information, develop joint responses and strategies, and coordinate fundraising efforts. Close cooperation with local authorities such as the Wali of Hodh Chargui and the Hakem of Bassikounou was maintained to address the needs of refugees in and around Mbera camp. Furthermore, UNHCR actively engaged in the UN reform process and bolstered partnerships with key UN agencies to enhance coordination. Moreover, UNHCR, in collaboration with the Regional Bureau, introduced two grant agreements with two refugee-led organizations in Mbera camp, members of the MENA Community Protection Network, while UNHCR is also closely collaborating with a number of community-based associations and outreach volunteers in Mbera camp and urban zones.

UNHCR's collaboration with the Mauritanian government aimed at assisting, empowering, and promoting self-reliance among refugees and asylum-seekers. The strategy comprised core humanitarian interventions to meet basic needs and uphold rights, along with development activities in partnership with the World Bank and GIZ. These initiatives aimed to integrate refugees into local economies and systems, fostering long-term solutions. Significant progress has been achieved in health and social protection sectors, with recent advancements in water and sanitation (WASH) and education.

Section 2: Results

2.1. Outcomes and Achievements

1. Outcome Area: Access to Territory, Reg. and Documentation

By 2023, more PoCs have access to territory and to effective profiling, registration and documentation procedures in Mauritania.

Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Target (2023)	Actual (2023)
1.1 Proportion of refugees and asylum seekers registered on an individual basis	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
1.2 Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	6.10%	21.60%	14.55%
1.3 Proportion of people with legally recognized identity documents or credentials	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%	92.63%

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

All individuals were registered on an individual basis in ProGres with a minimum of mandatory dataset information in the registration process.

Refugees in the Mbera camp are recognized as refugees on a prima facie basis, taking into consideration a legal text, notably the OAU Convention governing the specific problems of refugees in Africa.

A total of 118,503 refugees were registered at the end of 2023, including 92,375 in Mbera camp, 1,313 outside the camp, 7,119 in Nema, and 17,696 in urban Nouakchott and Nouadhibou. All registered refugees have at least one refugee status document.

As part of Mauritania's GRF 2023 commitment, partnership continues with the government partner (ANRPTS) in charge of issuing birth certificates, registration, and documentation.

In 2023, 713 birth certificates were issued by ANRPTS, bringing the total number of refugee births in Mauritania to an estimated 16,000.

2. Outcome Area: Status Determination

By 2023, PoCs will continue to have access to efficient and effective RSD processes provided by UNHCR.

Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Target (2023)	Actual (2023)
2.1 Average processing time (in days) from registration to first instance asylum decision	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	150.00	150.00	206.00
2.3 Proportion of people undergoing asylum procedures who have access to an effective appeal mechanism after first instance rejection of their claim	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%	79.59%

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Mauritania is a signatory to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol and the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa but does not have a national asylum law.

In the absence of a national asylum law, Decree 2022/063 on the implementation modalities of international conventions relating to refugees applies. A further ministerial decree of 2018 establishes the legal framework for the issuance of national identification cards for refugees, limiting this to camp residents. The scope of the decree was broadened in December 2020 to enable issuance of cards to out of camp refugees.

In this context, and until Mauritania adopts a national asylum law, UNHCR undertakes both registration and refugee status determination (RSD) procedures under its mandate. Registration, RSD, and documentation activities are critical in Mauritania to secure protection dividends for forcibly displaced people, notably in preventing refoulement, enabling freedom of movement, and ensuring access to rights and services. The protection status provided by a UNHCR issued card is generally respected by law enforcement authorities.

Article 2 of Decree 022/2005 (amended and replaced with decree 2022/063) states that “any asylum-seeker on the national territory may be granted refugee status if he falls within the mandate of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and if he is recognized as such by an act by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania under the conditions provided for in this decree.”

In February 2022, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between UNHCR and the MIDECE, formalizing UNHCR’s temporary role in refugee status determination. The MoU is expected to enhance protection from arrest, detention and refoulement, and facilitate and accelerate issuance of national refugee IDs for the refugee urban caseload in addition to camp-based caseload.

During the reporting period, there were 17,696 refugees and asylum-seekers in Nouakchott and Nouadhibou, 11,757 refugees and 5,939 asylum-seekers.

3. Outcome Area: Protection Policy and Law

By 2023, with advocacy and technical support, a legal framework has been adopted by the Mauritanian authorities relevant to the status of Asylum Seekers and Refugees, in accordance to international standards.

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Although there is no national law on asylum, the administrative authorities have issued Decree no. 2022-063, which repeals and replaces Decree no. 2005-0022 of March 3, 2005, as amended, laying down the procedures for applying international conventions on refugees in the Islamic Republic of Mauritania. This decree incorporates the standards and principles of protection contained in international instruments relating to refugees, in particular the OAU Convention governing the specific aspects of refugee problems in Africa. As such, it facilitates the issuance of refugee identification documents, and gives access to education and the job market on an equal footing with nationals. It allows refugees to move freely throughout the country, to sue and be sued, to own property and to access healthcare, in a highly protective environment. It prevents refugees and asylum-seekers from being turned away and prosecuted for illegal entry and residence in Mauritania.

Law N° 1961-112 on the Mauritanian nationality code and law n° 2010 - 023 repealing and replacing certain provisions of law n°1961.112 of June 12, 1961, constitute a good overarching framework to protect against statelessness. However, some gaps persist. UNHCR has engaged constructively with the Mauritanian authorities, including in what pertains to gender inequalities in the nationality framework. Mauritanian officials also participated in the statelessness course at the International Institute of Humanitarian Law in 2023.

4. Outcome Area: Gender-based Violence

By 2023, risk of GBV is reduced for all PoCs and all survivors increased and timely access to services provided

Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Target (2023)	Actual (2023)
4.1 Proportion of people who know where to access available GBV services	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	77.00%	70.00%	76.90%
4.2 Proportion of people who do not accept violence against women	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	75.00%	100.00%	75.00%
4.3 Proportion of survivors who are satisfied with GBV case management services	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	69.96%	70.00%	60.10%

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Based on the participation of community structures and the involvement of state protection structures, gender-based violence programming implemented in 2023 has enabled the Office to start changing attitudes towards practices that are harmful to refugees and asylum-seekers in Mauritania. At least, 75 percent of the population as of 2022 is aware of the harms of gender-based violence and can contribute to the fight against the practices that contribute to it. In fact, in 2023 the operation did not conduct a survey to assess refugees' perception of gender-based violence. The baseline survey is the same as the one conducted in 2022. And it's safe to say that the data hasn't changed much, because apart from routine activities, there are no major activities that can impact in terms of big changes.

In urban areas (Nouakchott and Nouadhibou), 380 people (10 men, 287 female, 08 boys and 75 girls) were made aware of gender-based violence issues through 18 awareness-raising sessions, including during international day celebrations. These awareness-raising sessions focused on various themes such as: the typologies of gender-based violence and their identification (domestic violence, denial of resources and opportunities, the referral circuit, criminal and forced marriages, psychological violence, etc. And have been conducted on a daily basis and on the occasion of the celebrations of international days (International Women's Day, World Refugee Day, Day of People Living with Disabilities, during the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence Campaign, etc.) 114 people, including UNHCR staff, partner staff, refugee and host community members benefited from capacity-building on safely handling disclosures, care mechanisms and referral pathways for addressing and managing cases of gender-based violence. In the Bassikounou and Mbera zones, 67 awareness-raising sessions, 20 counseling/focus group discussions and 12 training sessions were organized to build the capacity of staff and community structures. A total of 1,459 people, including 1,138 women, 67 men, 162 girls and 92 boys, benefited from local awareness-raising sessions on gender-based violence topics (as the importance of girls and boys education; child marriage; Gender-Based Violence typologies, process of case Referral and child protection) and focus groups on menstrual hygiene in the Mbera camp. In addition, 36 staff (19 women and 17 men) from international and national NGOs working in the Bassikounou Moughataa received training in case management.

All these activities of prevention in camp and urban area covered 37,402 people which represented 75 percent of the population who have been sensitized to gender-based violence issues. . In Mbera camp, awareness raising campaigns focused on the adverse effect of the child marriage practice for the physical and psychological development and well-being and education of girls.

As part of the response, in urban areas, 79 survivors were identified and monitored for 106 cases of gender-based violence, including rape (28), sexual assault (four), physical assault (19), early or forced marriage (24), denial of resources or opportunities (four) and psychological violence (28). Among the cases identified, support was provided in urban areas and at Camp de Mbera. These people benefited from comprehensive care through 77 forms of assistance, including material assistance (31), legal assistance (nine), psychosocial assistance (16) and medical assistance (21).

In the Bassikounou and Mberra camp areas, 525 cases of GBV were recorded and monitored, including early/forced marriage (476), rape (9), physical assault (18), psychological violence (13) and sexual assault (9). All survivors received at least two to three responses (psychosocial support (4615), medical (54),

counseling, legal/justice referral (23), socio-economic (492)). .

As part of the coordination process, a case management task force was set up to improve the intervention and response of humanitarian actors in the camp. Two missions were carried out by the Save The Children project team to the NEMA Regional Direction of Social Action, Child and Family to strengthen collaboration with state services.

5. Outcome Area: Child Protection

By 2023, child protection system strengthened and children's well-being ensured

Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Target (2023)	Actual (2023)
5.1 Proportion of children at heightened risk who are supported by a Best Interests Procedure	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	80.00%	80.00%	83.94%
5.2 Proportion of children who participate in community-based child protection programmes	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	80.00%	85.00%	86.51%
5.3 Proportion of unaccompanied and separated children who are in an alternative care arrangement	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	56.07%	61.00%	83.62%

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In 2023, UNHCR Mauritania has continued intervening in child protection to forcibly displaced children and their families according to the existing national strategy in Mauritania.

This year, 890 children at risk were identified. In all locations, different types of assistance were provided including access to legal documents, access to social services such as education and health, psychosocial support, material and legal assistance. In 2023, 629 children at heightened risk were identified among them 431 are separated children. 162 Best Interest Assessments (BIAs) and 5 Best Interest Determination (BIDs) were conducted towards children at risk to analyze their needs and inform possible solutions. The targeted assistances were provided to those children at heightened risk such as food/cash and nonfood items (NFIs) as well as psychosocial supports through case management.

UNHCR and partner's interventions to displaced children included animation, drawing, plastic arts, traditional games, reading, entertainment activities, cultural and international day events and participatory assessment exercises (20 percent of participants were children). In partnership with implementing partners (Save the Children in Mbera camp and Association des Femmes Cheffes de Familles (AFCF) in urban areas, children have accessed the child friendly Spaces (CFS) in their quarters (zones in the camps and in the community centers of AFCF in Nouakchott, in registration center managed by Association de Lutte contre la Pauvreté pour le Développement (ALPD) as well as public spaces in Nouadhibou and Nouakchott. Forced displaced children residing in Hodh El Chargui also benefited from child protection interventions from partners Action Contre la Faim (ACF), Appui au Développement Intégré des Communautés Rurales/ Mauritanie (ADICOR), Terre des Hommes, etc.

In partnership with AFCF, the implementing partner in Nouakchott, one unaccompanied child was placed in care family arrangement while separated children were placed with families with which they have lived since they are in Mauritania.

In Mbera camp, one unaccompanied child was placed in foster care, five in community-based families while a large number of separated children remain with their family members other than their parents.

6. Outcome Area: Safety and Access to Justice

By 2023, legal assistance is provided to persons of concern through partner NGO and detention monitoring is conducted.

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

50 refugees were arrested by police on the Bassikounou-Nouakchott and Nouakchott-Nouadhibou routes. Among them, 41 were arrested for lack of identification documents (expired refugee attestation) and nine because police officers did not recognize the refugee attestation. After legal assistance partner Al Insaniya confirmed their identity, all refugees were released.

To ensure that refugees and asylum-seekers have fair access to justice and to avoid discrimination on the basis of their status, UNHCR has partnered with a Mauritanian NGO, Al Insaniya, to legally advise refugees and asylum-seekers. In 2023, Al Insaniya provided 98 refugees with legal and judicial assistance in criminal matters. The most important offences are lack of identity document (expired certificate), contempt of a public official, fighting and theft. No refugees have been arrested or prosecuted for illegal entry into Mauritania, which continues to be very generous in accepting Malian nationals fleeing violence and persecution. In civil matters, Al Insaniya advised 57 refugees on social, road, family, and inheritance matters.

7. Outcome Area: Community Engagement and Women's Empowerment

By 2023, PoCs and host community networks are consolidated and strengthened for PoCs to identify risks and organize through community initiatives and leaderships

Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Target (2023)	Actual (2023)
7.2 Proportion of people who have access to safe feedback and response mechanisms	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	78.00%	83.00%	53.00%
7.3 Proportion of women participating in leadership/management structures	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	40.00%	50.00%	40.18%
7.1 Extent participation of displaced and stateless people across programme phases is supported.	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Moderate: 40-69 points	Extensive: ≥70 points	Extensive: ≥70 points

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In urban areas, forced displaced communities are residing in different Moughataas (communes). In Nouakchott, at least five main communities of refugee and asylum-seekers have their representatives who play the role of community leaders and work in closely with UNHCR and its partners. In total, 30 members of the different executive committees (15 women and 15 men) are active.

UNHCR and partners have conducted different meetings with them during 2023 of which some solutions were found for community protection issue such as physical and legal protection to asylum-seekers, birth registration, access to education, access to financial opportunities.

In August 2023, 12 community structures (nine in Nouakchott and three in Nouadhibou) composed by refugee and Mauritanian populations have been set up in partnership with AFCF. They are known as "comité de protection". Each structure has five members: two Mauritians (a mosque imam and a chief of the zone) and three refugees (a gender-based violence focal point, a child protection focal point and a community engagement on focal point).

The consultation sessions organized between the host populations and the refugees have enabled each

party to learn about the concerns of the other, resulting in regular meetings and exchanges in favor of peaceful cohabitation. In 2024, UNHCR and partners aim at enhancing these structures.

In the villages around Nema, there are nine mixed committees (refugees and nationals), with 61 members, 57 of whom are men. Their role is to resolve tensions and maintain the peaceful coexistence between host and refugee communities.

An association of 11 refugee women leaders is present and active in the city of Nema since 2023, focusing on sharing information among refugees in Nema city and identifying and referring to UNHCR vulnerable refugees in need of follow up.

In Mbera camp, a traditional structure of refugee representation has been active for several years alongside a growing number of dynamic volunteer groups. A camp coordinator as well as eight zone leaders (women and men) compose the core refugee coordination committee, the only body authorized to represent refugees before the Mauritanian administration, the gendarmerie, the UNHCR, partner organizations and local authorities in all matters of general interest. They are assisted by the extended coordination committee, composed of 44 men and 44 women leaders; each one of them having also a vice-leader. All different ethnic groups are involved to ensure participation of refugees is diverse.

Complaints and feedback channels (three hotlines, suggestion boxes, protection desks) are in place all around the country to receive feedback to the needs of forcibly displaced people. In 2023, an email address was created especially for sexual exploitation and abuse complaints. Combined results from a survey conducted in Mbera camp in late 2022 and post-monitoring distribution survey of mid-2023, revealed that more than 50 percent of the refugee population knows how to access safe feedback and response mechanisms. The operation is working towards strengthening and rendering more accessible and widely known communication and feedback channels.

8. Outcome Area: Well-Being and Basic Needs

By 2023, more PoCs will have access to targeted cash provision and supplementary assistance with food and non-food items

Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Target (2023)	Actual (2023)
8.1 Proportion of people that receive cash transfers and/or non-food items	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	79.19%	100.00%	73.35%
8.2 Proportion of people with primary reliance on clean (cooking) fuels and technology	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	13.00%	5.00%	11.69%

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Cash assistance continues to be critical for the well-being of forcibly displaced people in Mauritania. In 2023, Mauritania operation provided \$ 1 851 679 \$ 1,851,648 of cash assistance to 86,918 people to 86,918 people in Bassiknou (Mbera camp), Nouakchott and Nouadibhou. The operation continues to use cash for a wide range of purposes, including protection, basic needs, education, shelter, and livelihoods. A total 2,1households received NFI Kits. Each family received a kit consisting of 1 kitchen kit, 03 blankets, 04 pieces of clothing.

In 2023, the cash program aimed at meeting specific protection and solution purposes. 73 percent of the cash was disbursed without restrictions, meaning that refugees were able to choose how to spend it. Meanwhile, 2.3 percent the cash was distributed through the "cash for gas" project in the Mbera camp, in response to the issue of the widespread use of wood and charcoal as cooking fuel.

To date, the project has reached around 2,700 households in the Mbera camp. However, it is important to note that due to the influx of refugees linked to the Malian crisis, the percentage of households reached by the project is relatively lower compared to the initial target based on the population.

UNHCR's assistance is complementary to WFP's and government's social assistance efforts as it contributes to an additional safety net for vulnerable refugees and host communities.

In urban areas, UNHCR continued to improve and guarantee the protection of persons with specific needs (PSN). A total of 433 more vulnerable PSN received cash to meet their basic needs.

A clear majority of UNHCR's beneficiaries preferred cash or a combination of cash and in-kind as assistance modalities (96 percent). A total of 93 percent of the households reported having access to key services and goods they needed in the local markets and shops. 92% of the Post Distribution Monitoring respondents reported that cash assistance has improved their living conditions.

In 2023, in addition to the market monitoring, distribution monitoring and post-distribution monitoring activities implemented, the operation strengthened the documentation of reference, evidence and relevance of the implementation of cash assistance activities.

UNHCR has set up a cash working group in Bassiknou (refugees sitting) co-lead by the government. This technical working group i

aims to ensure coordination and the exchange of information and experience between the various actors involved in cash transfers in the Mbera camp.

9. Outcome Area: Sustainable Housing and Settlements

By 2023, CCCM of Mbera Camp will continue to be managed through an NGO, PoCs will continue to receive assistance for sustainable housing and sustainable environmental projects are undertaken

Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Target (2023)	Actual (2023)
9.1 Proportion of people living in habitable and affordable housing	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%	78.00%
9.2 Proportion of people that have energy to ensure lighting	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	4.45%	4.30%	7.00%

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

The RMS 2022 survey revealed that 95% of refugees and asylum seekers live in tent and almost urban refugees in house .Refugees living in the camp do not pay the rent for house. Almost half of urban refugees and asylum seekers population have difficulty paying the rent from time to time.

A total of 215 tents were distributed to new arrivals in 2023. Additionally, 305 vulnerable households benefited from shelter material, thereby improving their housing conditions. Furthermore, besides tents, 941 households received cash for shelter. During the review period, 100 percent of identified vulnerable families in need of shelter received assistance either in the form of family tents or cash for shelter to enhance their housing conditions.

The majority of households in the camp (93 percent) has no access to energy sources for domestic lighting, which represents a critical issue. 88 percent used small solar lamps daily to meet their individual lighting needs.

The almost total lack of access to energy sources for domestic lighting indicates an urgent need for intervention to improve the living conditions of the residents.

The camp's urbanization project has been selected by the Mauritanian government as one of the projects financed by the World Bank-IDA18, which runs from 2020 to 2025 and includes electrification of the camp. According to the work schedule, the project could be completed in 2024.

The rehabilitation of 48 community infrastructures was carried out in the camp, including four camp health facilities rehabilitated and renovated through the INAYA program, in addition to others such as community centers, distribution centers, a registration center, etc., ensuring their functionality despite the effects of extreme weather conditions and the aging of most community infrastructures.

Moreover, 30 new classrooms were durably constructed in three camp schools, in line with the standards set by the Ministry of Education (with six classrooms funded by UNHCR and 24 others by the support of UNICEF and ILO). The construction of two proximity offices and the installation of a rub hall aimed to strengthen the capacity for food storage for new arrivals.

10. Outcome Area: Healthy Lives

By 2023, provision of healthcare and services is fully transitioned to the governmental authorities

Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Target (2023)	Actual (2023)
10.1 Proportion of children aged 9 months to five years who have received measles vaccination	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	84.97%	98.00%	61.72%
10.2. Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	80.00%	95.00%	42.21%

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

The process of shifting health services to government continued mainly with the development of a roadmap for inclusion of refugees in the national health system. This progress was made possible by the strong collaboration between UNHCR and the government of Mauritania.

UNHCR and the Ministry of Health significantly enhanced the health infrastructure of the four primary level facilities in Mbera camp. Additional buildings were constructed and some rehabilitation work was carried out at the health center. Camp-based facilities are financially autonomous, but their only source of income remains the reimbursement by INAYA and UNHCR. In addition to these achievements on infrastructures, health facilities hired additional staff to support the exiting workforce from the Ministry of Health and to ensure appropriate supply of medicines and medical materials.

In terms of service provision and beside the tens of thousands of new arrivals, all refugees in the Mbera camp continued enjoying a full package of quality primary care provided in camp-based facilities. A total of 213,880 consultations were conducted including 48,480 for children under the age of 5 years. Mostly due to the population increase driven by new arrivals, the number of consultations during the second half of the year was 34% higher than that of the first half. The most predominant diseases were respiratory infections (19.6 percent), gastric diseases (6.1 percent), diarrhea (6.0 percent), skin conditions (4.7 percent), malaria and urinary tract infections (2.3 percent each) and cardiovascular diseases (2.1 percent). The mental health conditions were the cause of 0.3 percent of consultations and acute malnutrition represented 0.4 percent only. This indicates that some cases of those conditions went undiagnosed. Trauma cases of different types and levels of severity represented 0.5 percent of consultations but they took an important proportion of health budget when referred for secondary and tertiary care.

Camp-based facilities provided care for 7,613 patients with severe conditions requiring close monitoring.

In 2023, UNHCR made efforts to control a measles outbreak that began the previous year, resulting in 232 recorded cases in 2023. In response, UNHCR organized a mass vaccination campaign in the Mbera camp, resulting in 62 percent of the 3,480 children receiving measles vaccinations. Additionally, 1,327 birth occurred in healthcare facilities, with assistance by qualified healthcare personnel, while 2,634 pregnant women did their first antenatal consultation in camp-based facilities.

11. Outcome Area: Education

By 2023, inclusion of refugees into the national system of education promoted and refugee children's access to quality education improved.

Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Target (2023)	Actual (2023)
11.1 Proportion of young people enrolled in tertiary and higher education	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0.94%	1.00%	1.04%
11.2 Proportion of children and young people enrolled in the national education system	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	3.00%	3.00%	3.59%

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

A limited number of refugees have access to higher education. This can be explained by the low number of refugees completing secondary education, and the financial and linguistic barriers they face in accessing higher education in Mauritania. This particularly affects young people from the Mbera camp who have followed a Malian program far from Nouakchott, the only city where all students converge for higher education.

To give refugees access to higher education, UNHCR awards DAFI bachelor's scholarships and UNHCR master's scholarships to several students based on excellence. At tertiary level, there were a total of 111 refugee students, with a relatively low rate of girls (31 percent).

Increased advocacy with the authorities and raising community awareness of the importance of children's schooling and the right to universal and equitable access to education have played an important role in boosting enrolment. In 2023, UNHCR supported access to education for 1791 refugees through its cash for education program. A total of 1,387 children, including 688 girls and 699 boys enrolled in public and private schools recognized by the Mauritanian authorities, received one-off cash assistance at the new school year to cover initial fees. UNHCR also continues to provide quarterly cash assistance to cover the school fees of 297 children studying in private primary and secondary schools due to the lack of alternatives.

At present, only refugee pupils living in host communities have access to national schools, due to UNHCR's support in collaboration with local education authorities.

Access to national education for students in Mbera camp, is limited, as refugee students in the Mbera camp currently follow a parallel system using the Malian curriculum. Integration into the Mauritanian education system is planned for 2024, starting with the first primary grades, and should reach the secondary cycle by 2029; during this period, Arabic will be reinforced in the Malian program to anticipate language barriers at tertiary level.

In addition, thanks to the additional capacity provided by the ProNexus project, UNHCR has been able to strengthen coordination in the education sector. UNHCR engaged with the government as part of the education reform initiated in 2022 and finalized in 2023, and actively participated in sector and expert meetings, sector working groups and sector policy development workshops to ensure that the refugee issue is taken into account. UNHCR also plays a key role in local education partnerships and co-leads the education working group in Bassikounou with UNICEF.

UNHCR finalized its strategy and a budgeted action plan on the Inclusion of Refugees in the National Education System in Mauritania through a partnership with IIEP-UNESCO Paris. This refugee inclusion plan has been integrated into Mauritania's national education sector development plan, a ten-year education plan encompassing all education sub-sectors, including pre-school, primary, secondary, higher education, non-formal education, and vocational training.

Following a diagnostic study carried out by UNESCO on out-of-school children, UNHCR and UNICEF were able to support the organization of several workshops with the government, leading to a pilot project for the care of out-of-school children, including refugees, who are also affected by the phenomenon of dropping out and non-enrolment.

12. Outcome Area: Clean Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

By 2023, water management in Mbera Camp is fully transitioned to governmental authorities, while other WASH facilities are maintained by UNHCR and CCCM Partner.

Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Target (2023)	Actual (2023)
12.1 Proportion of people using at least basic drinking water services	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%	87.00%
12.2 Proportion of people with access to a safe household toilet	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In Mbera camp, refugees have access to about 15 liters of clean water per day on average, which is less than the recommended amount of 20 liters per day according to Sphere standards. This is mainly because many new refugees from Mali keep arriving. Despite this, UNHCR and partners managed to assure that the camp has six motorized boreholes that provide continuous access to clean water, and the pumping systems are regularly maintained.

UNHCR and partners conducted water quality tests at water points, with over 99% of samples showing residual free chlorine levels between 0.2 and 0.5 mg/liter. Regular maintenance of water system equipment ensured a supply of clean water in the camp, particularly in health centers and refugee reception areas as part of hygiene measures for prevention and control. To respond to the influx of new arrivals, 150 latrines were rehabilitated (out of 150 planned), an additional 17 emergency latrines were constructed, and 127 latrines were emptied to increase their functionality. Thus, UNHCR secured an average ratio of 30 people per latrine was maintained.

UNHCR and its partners improved wastewater management in Mbera camp by rehabilitating 65 washing area drainage systems and water points. Additionally, to ensure the sustainability of its interventions, UNHCR contributed to the creation and the training of 44 water management teams.

To integrate refugees into the national system, diagnostic studies were conducted to enhance water production and distribution. Plans include constructing a new high-flow borehole, a 300 m³ water tower, extending the water network, improving the main pipeline, and maintaining the two existing water towers.

Additionally, UNHCR distributed cash for hygiene kits targeting girls and women of reproductive age to promote menstrual hygiene and reinforce the dignity of women and girls aged 11 to 49. In 2023, 16,303 women and girls of reproductive age received cash for hygiene kits.

13. Outcome Area: Self Reliance, Economic Inclusion and Livelihoods

By 2023, Persons of concern in Mauritania have increased access to the formal labor market, including through the adoption of related public policy.

Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Target (2023)	Actual (2023)
13.1. Proportion of people with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile-money-service provider	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	6.00%	20.00%	11.33%
13.2. Proportion of people who self-report positive changes in their income compared to previous year	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	18.00%	30.00%	19.00%
13.3 Proportion of people (working age) who are unemployed	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	83.67%	75.00%	88.00%

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In 2023, UNHCR focused on four key/broad areas of interventions in the livelihood sector: i) micro, small and medium enterprise development (MSME), ii) financial inclusion, iii) agro-ecological food production opportunity and iv) coordination and advocacy activities.

In 2023, UNHCR supported 59 new micro-, small-, and medium-sized green enterprises (54 for refugees to work in and 5 for host communities members). An estimated lumpsum amount of \$273,725 was distributed to all 59 MSME according to their respective business plans. 64 percent of all MSMEs supported by UNHCR in 2023, were female-led enterprises, thus important progress has been made regarding women's decision-making power, and asset ownership. 13 percent of MSMEs supported by UNHCR in 2023, were enterprises led by persons with specific needs (disabilities).

According to dashboard figures of December 2023, 49711 is the total number of working age population across the operation. The social registry reports that only 12% (5965) of this working age population were employed in 2023 while 88% (43746 individuals) are unemployed. Livelihood activities supported by UNHCR and its partners in Mbera refugee camp created employment for 548 people out of the approximately 36711 working age population in the camp. Feedback from refugees highlighted that they can now realize their aspirations, enhance their living conditions and actively participate in society by playing a productive role. Overall, the assumption is that there was a slight increase from the baseline during this reporting period as of several number of individuals benefiting from income generating activities have been increased... However, it should be noted that there was no dedicated survey in 2023 to assess the change of income generation.

UNHCR has worked with a range of banks (Banque Nationale de Mauritanie, Banque Mauritanienne d'Investissement, Banque El Amana and Banque Populaire de Mauritanie) and micro financial institutions bringing together efforts to contribute to achieving results. Between 2022 and 2023, access to financial products showed an upward trend concerning refugees. Based on the data of financial inclusion of refugees from the above-mentioned banks in 2023, 1182 refugees opened bank accounts while 2067 refugees opened digital bank.

Over 37,000 refugees have access to smart phones which enables them to access financial products and services. Regardless of their income or background, refugees with the National Identification Number (NNI) can access appropriate and affordable financial products and services in Mauritania. All refugees who have been registered are provided the NNI number which enables them to qualify and benefit from the financial products. With access to financial services, refugees can start their own businesses. This helps them become self-reliant by connecting them with banks and other financial institutions.

Through UNHCR local partner, SOS Desert, 375 small-scale farmers cultivated 3.5ha of land to grow legumes such as tomato, carrot, onion among others for food and commercial purposes. The vegetables produced about 24963 kg of produce, of which 16709kg were consumed and 8204kg sold for 1,279,620 MRU. In addition, CIRC who have since left the operation supported 60 small-scale farmers to conduct similar market gardening activities on 6ha of land through solar water-powered irrigation. UNHCR continues to support and follow this activity through SOS Desert as only 1.5ha of the 6ha has been cultivated with the plan of increasing the number of small-scale farmers to 240 individuals to cultivate the remaining 4.5ha for income generation and consumption purposes.

14. Outcome Area: Voluntary Return and Sustainable Reintegration

By 2023, all Refugees expressing interest for voluntary repatriation are counselled and supported to ensure informed and safe returns to countries of origin.

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Voluntary repatriation is usually viewed as the most desirable long-term solution by the refugees themselves as well as by the international community. Keeping in line with this, UNHCR provided information and advocacy to anyone approaching the office seeking information on possible voluntary repatriation.

However, in 2023 only a low number of individuals did approach the office for possible voluntary repatriation. This low figure can be explained by the fact that 87 percent of refugees in urban areas are from Mali (the figure stands at over 98 percent nationwide). According to a survey on return intentions conducted in February 2021, 78 percent of the refugees interviewed were against an immediate return to Mali if the conditions for security and integration were not met.

In 2023, the socio-political instability in Mali, exacerbated by repeated coups d'état and the uncertainty linked to the withdrawal of the international forces, did not favor the resumption of voluntary return. On the contrary, 2023 was marked by a significant influx of refugees from Mali to Mauritania. A return movement to Mali is thus not expected in either short- or mid-term.

15. Outcome Area: Resettlement and Complementary Pathways

By 2023, all Refugees meeting the criteria for resettlement or complementary pathways are identified, counselled and supported.

Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Target (2023)	Actual (2023)
15.1 Number of refugees submitted by UNHCR for resettlement	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100	150	108
15.2 Average processing time from resettlement submission to departure under normal priority	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	800.00	300.00	769.00

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

UNHCR broadened access to durable solutions since 2022. While the focus remained on local solutions, especially through socioeconomic inclusion, UNHCR increased substantially its resettlement submissions to the US and boosted case identification and referrals for resettlement consideration, with focus on cases with serious medical conditions, victims of violence and torture and those with acute legal and physical protection needs for maximum protection dividends and long-term durable solutions. The operation submitted 108 cases this year mainly to the US, but also to the Netherlands and Canada, representing over 100 percent of the allocated quota.

102 vulnerable people have also departed for resettlement in 2023 making it a very successful year in terms of resettlement activities.

16. Outcome Area: Integration and other Local Solutions

By 2023, refugees' access to civil registration will be strengthened and particularly vulnerable

refugees be included in the national social safety net programme.

Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Target (2023)	Actual (2023)
16.2 Proportion of people covered by national social protection systems	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	30.56%	45.00%	31.64%

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In 2023, the TEKAVOUL and El maouna (regular social protection scheme by the government) cash distributions assisted 7500 households classified as the most vulnerable and registered in the TEKAVOUL database. The distribution involved UNHCR, partners Action Contre la Faim and Save the Children, community leaders, and community relays.

2.2. Age, Gender and Diversity

In 2023, an age, gender and diversity (AGD) approach was mainstreamed across all sectors to ensure that all forcibly displaced and stateless persons enjoy their rights on an equal footing with the nationals. Measures were also taken to ensure inclusion of AGD and accountability to affected populations (AAP) related commitments in partnership agreements of all partners. Disaggregated data is collected by sex and age, and where possible by disability. Reports and assessment tools include language and considerations on age, gender, and diversity. The operation established a gender/LGBTQI+ focal point system, with focal points in all the urban areas of Nouakchott and Nouadhibou where LGBTQI+ refugees are registered to mainstream gender equality and ensure safe spaces for LGBTQI+ refugees in their respective locations. UNHCR has a multi-channel feedback, complaint & response mechanism including UNHCR hotline, email, SMS messaging services, and in-person protection desks. These channels of communication allowed the forcibly displaced people to provide feedback and raise any concerns regarding the projects designed for them. Any complaints or suggestions are taken seriously and duly followed-up. In 2023, UNHCR provided multiple training sessions on accountability to affected populations to its staff and its partners for an enhanced the capacity in this domain.

UNHCR ensured its accountability to affected populations throughout the project planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation phases. Activities are consistent with a commitment to accountability to affected populations and a community-based protection approach and comply with UNHCR's age, gender and diversity policy: working with people and communities for equality and protection. Participation and inclusion of forcibly displaced people' views and perspectives are ensured through the participation and involvement of the affected populations in the project planning phase followed by the regular consultations and discussions throughout the implementation phases.

In 2023, UNHCR, in collaboration with all stakeholders, local authorities and government institutions, organized a participatory assessment with refugees as well as members of the host community. 736 people took part in the 2023 participatory assessment focus group and community level discussions, in Bassikounou, Mbera camp, Nema, Nouakchott and Nouadhibou. To ensure women's effective participation, a total number of 431 refugee women, 290 asylum-seekers women, 190 female members of the civil society and 46 female members of the host community participated in the exercise. On the male side, 351 refugees, 250 asylum seekers, 60 host community members, 120 local civil society members and one local community leader participated in the assessment. At least 150 people with various Sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sex characteristics also took part in the exercise. French, Tamashek, Bambara and Poular were the four most widely spoken languages among participants. 32 percent of participants were aged between 25 and 59, while 27 percent were aged between 18 and 24; 8 percent were aged between 60 and 79 and 3 percent over 80. 43 percent were from Mali, 14 percent from CAR and 8 percent from Cameroon.

The results and recommendations expressed by the affected populations will be included in the Office's planning to ensure that their perspectives and priorities are taken into consideration. Women and girls participate equally and meaningfully in all decision-making, community management and leadership structures, and committees.

Section 3: Resources

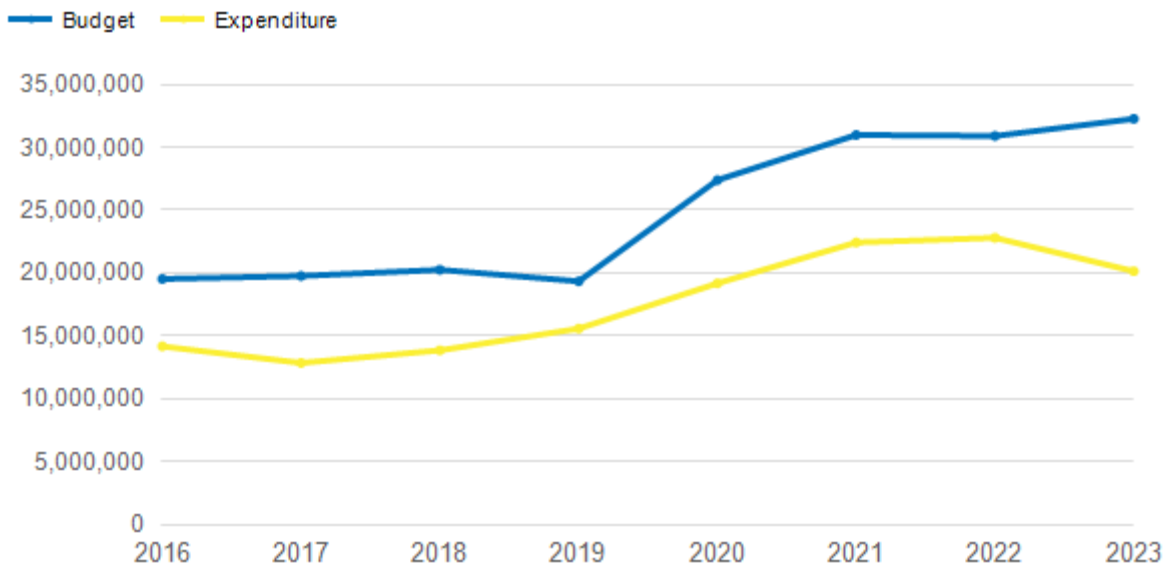
3.1 Financial Data

(Financial figures in USD)

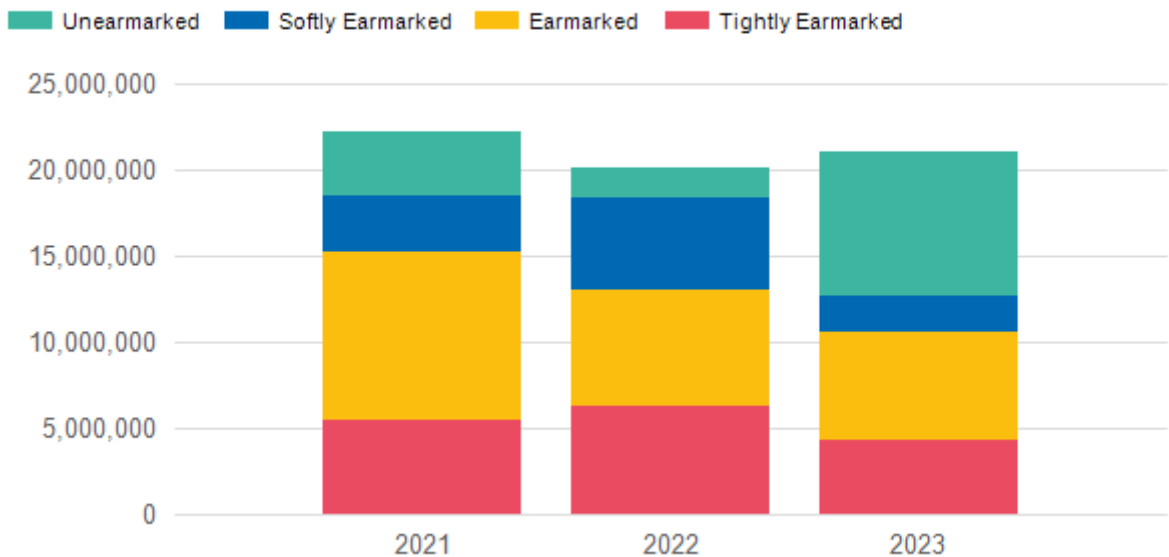
Impact Area	Final Budget	Funds Available	Funds Available as % of Budget	Expenditure	Expenditure as % of Funds Available
IA1: Protect	6,245,947	5,945,343	95.19%	5,162,761	86.84%
IA2: Assist	14,719,159	8,162,256	55.45%	7,853,209	96.21%
IA3: Empower	7,303,218	4,697,804	64.33%	4,697,804	100.00%
IA4: Solve	3,990,791	2,433,519	60.98%	2,433,519	100.00%
All Impact Areas		222,683			
Total	32,259,115	21,461,605	66.53%	20,147,294	93.88%

Outcome Area	Final Budget	Funds Available	Funds Available as % of Budget	Expenditure	Expenditure as % of Funds Available
OA1: Access/Doc	1,666,063	2,110,721	126.69%	1,816,681	86.07%
OA2: Status	1,012,503	1,094,137	108.06%	565,486	51.68%
OA3: Policy/Law	640,476	542,886	84.76%	542,886	100.00%
OA4: GBV	811,407	520,260	64.12%	520,260	100.00%
OA5: Children	1,273,927	902,664	70.86%	902,664	100.00%
OA6: Justice	841,572	814,784	96.82%	814,784	100.00%
OA7: Community	2,930,179	1,872,505	63.90%	1,872,505	100.00%
OA8: Well-being	4,689,685	2,784,983	59.39%	2,475,937	88.90%
OA9: Housing	2,537,385	1,541,998	60.77%	1,541,998	100.00%
OA10: Health	3,457,692	1,828,512	52.88%	1,828,512	100.00%
OA11: Education	2,184,006	1,738,721	79.61%	1,738,721	100.00%
OA12: WASH	2,015,117	998,028	49.53%	998,028	100.00%
OA13: Livelihood	2,189,033	1,086,578	49.64%	1,086,578	100.00%
OA14: Return	619,387	566,402	91.45%	566,402	100.00%
OA15: Resettle	513,812	555,232	108.06%	555,232	100.00%
OA16: Integrate	2,857,592	1,311,884	45.91%	1,311,884	100.00%
EA17: Systems	909,092	706,122	77.67%	706,122	100.00%
EA18: Support	1,110,188	302,612	27.26%	302,612	100.00%
All Outcome Areas		182,572			
Total	32,259,115	21,461,605	66.53%	20,147,294	93.88%

Budget and Expenditure Trend



Contributions Trend by Type



3.2. Resources Overview

In 2023, the protractedness of the Central Sahel situation, the limited political and economic attention by the international community to Mauritania, and the small diplomatic representation in Nouakchott continued to challenge UNHCR’s resource mobilization efforts. As the humanitarian sector still faces unprecedented funding shortfalls, the operation maintained its focus to advocacy at field level, including through reinforcing relationships with local diplomatic communities and proactively engaging with the UN pooled funds as well as private sector fundraising. The operation has also worked with the Regional Bureau to align its priorities with the regional ones while

considering the particular context and response Mauritania is included. Despite a lower funding level in comparison to 2022, the operation could finance 62 percent (\$ 19 million) of its overall requirements in 2023 (\$ 32 million).

Changes due population movements from Mali have had a considerable impact on available resources, which were already insufficient for the populations in the camps and out of camp. Needs expressed (OP budget) in 2023 had not taken into account the major changes we have observed.

In 2023, UN has also enhanced coordination with the Resident Coordinator's office, WFP and UNICEF to submit joint fund proposals in support of existing resilience projects in the region and of the implementation of the inter-agency contingency plan activated in December 2023. The operation boosted the cooperation to effectively operationalize a joint UN fundraising by co-leading with WFP the UN working group on resource mobilization in Mauritania.

Competing priorities which stem from increasing humanitarian needs and heightened refugee influx with no short- to medium-term intention of return, has created unforeseen strain on existing services and infrastructures in the country, with a negative impact to camp coordination and camp management, water, sanitation, and hygiene, and health. Furthermore, as Mbera camp is saturated (original capacity to host 70,000 individuals), 2023 arrivals have mostly settled out of the camp, requiring UNHCR to adapt its response and prioritize the use of resources to respond to growing and shifting needs.

As the emergency unfolds in Mauritania, additional funding for 2024 will be needed to respond to the most urgent needs of new arrivals and maintain UNHCR's support to the ongoing development initiatives in Hodh Chargui and national efforts to include refugees in national systems, in alignment with the government's pledges made at the 2023 Global Refugee Forum.

Section 4: Lessons Learned and Future Outlook

4.1 Lessons Learned and Future Outlook

Based on the evaluation conducted on the progress made this year towards achieving the desired outcomes and results, it has been determined that there is no requirement for a strategic reorientation of the strategy. This indicates that the current strategy in place is effectively addressing the objectives and goals set forth, and there are no significant deviations or shortcomings that would necessitate a change in direction. The evaluation likely assessed various aspects of the strategy's implementation, including its alignment with objectives, effectiveness in achieving results, adaptability to changing circumstances, and overall impact.



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