



SUPPORTING INCLUSION OF REFUGEES IN THE NATIONAL SOCIAL SAFETY NET

MAURITANIA

OVERVIEW

Since 2012, Mauritania has been hosting Malian refugees on its territory following the outbreak of the security crisis in Mali. As of January 2021, there are some 63,600 Malian refugees in the arid south-east Bassikounou area, where Mbera refugee camp is located, and some 5,900 urban refugees and asylum-seekers in the cities of Nouakchott and Nouadhibou. While some refugees are on the path to self-reliance, others find it difficult to meet their basic needs.

Conscious of the likely prolonged nature of forced displacement in the country, the Government of Mauritania is strongly committed to ensuring the protection of refugees while promoting their increased self-reliance and the resilience of host communities.

Mauritania is a party to several international conventions related to refugees and the Government of Mauritania pledged to pass a national asylum law during the Global Forum for Refugees (December 2019).

Since the establishment of Mbera camp in 2012, UNHCR, WFP and the Government of Mauritania have worked closely together on the provision of food assistance and livelihoods programming to support essential needs and refugee self-reliance.

In 2021, with support from UNHCR and the World Food Programme (WFP), the Government of Mauritania will **include refugee households in the national Social Registry of Mauritania**, in order to allow eligible refugees to benefit from the assistance under national social protection programmes.



THE SOCIAL REGISTRY OF MAURITANIA

The social protection system in Mauritania has two main cash-based social safety net programmes:

- ❖ The **TEKAVOUL programme** supports the poorest households on a **regular and sustainable basis** with **conditional cash transfers** and **social promotion activities**, designed to promote knowledge of essential family practices and investment in early childhood development. Households are enrolled for a **5-year program cycle**.
- ❖ The **ELMAOUNA programme** has been implemented by the Food Security Commission (CSA) since 2017 to enable households to **cope with shocks** that affect their well-being, particularly during droughts.

These programmes aim to reduce extreme poverty in Mauritania through the following:

1. Preventing people from falling into extreme poverty
2. Protecting vulnerable people from shocks, and
3. Increasing people's resilience by increasing their incomes.

KEY STEPS

IN THE INCLUSION OF REFUGEES IN THE TEKAVOUL SOCIAL SAFETY NET 2021

The Government of Mauritania, UNHCR and WFP are undertaking the following key activities.



DATA SHARING

Establishment of secure data sharing processes between UNHCR and the Government of Mauritania to ensure data on refugees inform the identification of eligible households, following data protection principles.



ASSESSMENT

Household survey of all refugees in Mbera camp and urban areas, identifying needs and socio-economic characteristics, validating lists for inclusion in the Social Registry and informing the targeting approach for assistance.



COMMUNITY SENSITIZATION

Awareness raising and community messaging on the Social Registry, and the assessment and targeting process encouraging refugee engagement and buy-in.



PROTECTION ANALYSIS

Risk analysis on the inclusion of refugees in the national social safety net system, including assistance coverage and values, access to services, possible social tensions and exit strategy.



TARGETING

The development of a targeting model for identifying the most vulnerable refugees.



COMPLAINT AND FEEDBACK MECHANISMS

Set up of a complaint and feedback mechanism through a specific committee and a toll-free number.

COMPLIMENTARY PROGRAMMING

In support of the Government of Mauritania, and guided by the 2018-2022 UN Strategy to Strengthen the Livelihoods of Host and Refugee Communities in the Moughataa of Bassikounou, UNHCR and WFP are **supporting refugee livelihoods** to strengthen the resilience of host populations and **support peaceful coexistence** between the two communities.

UNHCR-WFP are providing **complimentary programming on cash and self-reliance programming** aimed at supporting the financial inclusion of refugee and host community households, to diversify and consolidate their sources of income, build assets, and provide for their immediate needs with dignity.

For the next three years, UNHCR and GIZ will contribute to the improvement of access to social protection and to environmentally sensitive livelihoods opportunities for refugees and vulnerable host community members. This will be done through a new joint project on building capacities for strengthened socio-economic inclusion of refugees and vulnerable members of host communities in Mauritania, supporting the transition from humanitarian assistance to government social assistance programmes.

- ❖ UNHCR is **supporting over 1,000 income-generating activities** in the sectors of butchery, dairy products, leathers and hides and sewing, as well as over **1,800 participants in market gardens**, inside and outside Mbera camp.
- ❖ WFP is developing **livelihood interventions** with refugee participation in support of the **conservation of environmental, soil and water assets** to reduce the pressure on natural resources in the vicinity of the camp while **supporting the livestock value chain**.





INCLUSION IN ADDITIONAL SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAMMES

The enrolment of vulnerable refugees in the Social Registry will foster the inclusion of refugees in national social protection programmes other than Tekavoul and Elmaouna.

For example, vulnerable refugees of Mbera camp registered in the Social Registry will benefit from specific health support under the Ministry of Health 'Inaya' Programme.

SUPPORT TO THE SOCIAL REGISTRY

UNHCR and WFP are supporting the Social Registry in the following areas:

- ❖ **Refugee sensitization** strategy design and implementation
- ❖ Providing expertise to inform the **survey design**, including the questionnaire and data collection plan
- ❖ Contributing to the **training of survey enumerators**
- ❖ Data collection monitoring, data cleaning and **data analysis** (profiling and targeting).

Under the data sharing agreement signed between UNHCR and the Government of Mauritania, UNHCR is also **providing refugees' data to the Social Registry** to identify refugees and ensure that all of them are surveyed.