



IOM MAURITANIA



Children in the M'Béra Refugee Camp.

©IOM/F. Giordani

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IOM celebrates International Migrants Day in Mauritania



Members of the Conservatoire International de Musique et des Arts de Nouakchott (CIMAN), perform during International Migrants Day celebrations at the National Museum in Nouakchott, Dec. 14, 2015 ©IOM/Agron Dragaj

December 14, 2015 - their home. IOM Mauritania brought attention to the rights of migrants during a ceremony to commemorate International Migrants Day. The event, held at the Mauritanian National Museum, hosted dozens of government and United Nations officials, members of the diplomatic corps in Mauritania, and migrants who have made Mauritania

In her opening address, Mrs. Anke Strauss, IOM Mauritania Chief of Mission reiterated IOM's commitment to humane and orderly migration for the benefit of all.

"We live in an era of unprecedented mobility that has unfortunately been marked by enormous human tragedies," Mrs. Strauss said. "Thousands

of people fleeing war and famine have died in their search of a better future. This event is a solemn tribute to all those people."

The event featured a migration-themed sketch by students of the Dijamli primary school, a musical concert by members of the Conservatoire International de Musique et des Arts de Nouakchott (CIMAN), and a photo exhibition of mi-

grants who have succeeded in their migration journey to Mauritania. The exhibition was curated by photographer and UN DESA Fellow Flavia Giordani under the theme "I Know Who I Am".

Find out more about the International #MigrantsDay worldwide campaign at www.migrantsday.iom.int.



Students from the Dijamli primary school perform a sketch during IMD celebrations in Nouakchott, Dec. 14, 2015 ©IOM/Agron Dragaj



Students of the CIMAN group perform during IMD celebrations in Nouakchott, Dec. 14, 2015 ©IOM/Agron Dragaj

IOM builds four new border posts in Southern Mauritania

Last year, IOM Mauritania completed the construction of four border posts to support the border management efforts of the Mauritanian gendarmerie at its most active border crossing areas. The construction of these border posts is part of a project funded by the European Union for the benefit of the Ministry of the Interior and Decentralisation and the Mauritanian Gendarmerie.

The 31-month project aims at strengthening the management of migratory flows in Mauritania through better border control and effective assistance to irregular migrants.

The new border posts were built in the districts of Tenaha, Hammod, El Melgué and Sagné in southwestern Mauritania. A border post in the Rosso district, where increasing migrant activity has been recorded, was also renovated as part of this project.

The border posts were constructed in locations specified by the Gendarmerie and are managed by the police departments of Gorgol, Guidimaka and Hassaba. They strategically cover border areas between Mauritania and Senegal (Sagné) and between Mauritania and Mali (El Melgua, Hamood and Tenaha). Before the project is completed in July 2016, another border post will be constructed near Lexeiba.



An IOM project manager looks over migration logs with a border management official in Lexeiba II. IOM has built four border posts to help officials better manage migratory flows from Senegal and Mali. ©IOM

AREAS OF INTERVENTION

GOVERNANCE

- Developing SOPs and passport examination manuals for the police and gendarmerie;
- Analyzing legal texts and reports on border management;
- Strengthening collaboration between various state departments;

TRAINING

- Training and monitoring over 200 staff of the Gendarmerie and police working at border posts on border management and migration, the use of computers, the rights of refugees, first aid skills;
- Training of journalists migration issues;

INFRASTRUCTURES and EQUIPMENT

The construction, renovation and furnishing of five border posts and testing of a system to manage the movements and travels of local residents in pilot border post;

AVRR

Provide funding for the assisted voluntary return and reintegration of 60 identified migrants stranded in Mauritania and wishing to return to their countries of origin.

This project is funded by the European Union:



IOM's community stabilisation response in Southeast Mauritania

IOM recognized early on the need for an intervention to limit the impact of the humanitarian crisis plaguing southeast Mauritania. Only a few months after the outbreak of hostilities in northern Mali in 2012, tens of thousands of Malians fleeing the clashes sought refuge in southeast Mauritania.

The UNHCR set up the M'Béra Refugee Camp to provide assistance to more than 50,000 Malian refugees, rapidly overwhelming the region. The department of Bassikounou saw its population more than double as a result of the inflow of refugees and migrants who made the M'Béra camp their temporary home. Moreover, the expanding desertification, extreme climatic conditions, harsh winds, and severe, persistent drought increased the vulnerability of the refugees, migrants and their host communities.

IOM established a sub-office in Bassikounou in April 2013 to supervise and manage the growing number of community stabilisation projects launched in response to the prolonged settlement of Malian refugees and its effect on the region's stability.

A Fragile Region

Several UN agencies highlight that the harsh climate and the increasing human and livestock population greatly threaten the food security of the region.



A new slaughterhouse was built in M'Béra to encourage clean and healthy farming.

©IOM/A. Sow

The [Overview of Humanitarian Needs of Mauritania in 2016](#) particularly points to the decrease in rainfall over the last five years and systemic poverty as factors contributing to the severe food insecurity currently affecting the region. The combination of natural and man-made maladies increases the risk of conflict over scarce and dwindling natural resources between communities along the borders. The gap in financial and material support available to these communities only shows the need for a targeted and sustainable response to limit the effects of the crisis.

IOM's Response

Thanks to funding from the governments of Japan, Italy and the United States, and the [Central Emergency Response Fund \(CERF\)](#), IOM has completed five projects and continues progress on another to help bring sustainable

solutions to the most urgent needs of vulnerable populations affected by the crisis in southeast Mauritania.

Severe drought being the most pertinent factor leading to food insecurity in the region, IOM has focused its response to ensure a

More than 25,000 people in 22 villages and the M'Béra Refugee Camp have benefitted from these projects since 2013.

constant, clean water supply for area residents and their cattle. To this effect, rainwater harvesting systems and water distribution networks for irrigation and drinking water have been installed in several villages. These systems include water wells, water points for cattle, public fountains for human use, faucets and water purification kits. In addition, three new water towers have been constructed in the

villages of Sissakou, Koussana and Bérétoume to improve the water distribution networks in those villages.

These reliable sources of water are already helping residents to diversify their diets and their economic options. This objective was achieved by establishing three integrated

farms in the most affected villages. The integrated farms, (including a henhouse, two fish basins

with an estimated capacity of 1,000 fish, and a vegetable garden) are helping villagers add vegetables and fish to their meat-based diets, and offers communities to sell excess produces for an additional source of revenue.

Smaller vegetable gardens were established in three other villages, based on resident's needs. These smaller projects also help stabilise communities by creating additional sources of food and revenue. Based on the success

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A beneficiary presents her harvest from a farm installed by IOM in Dioweinkara, in Southeast Mauritania.

©IOM/A. Sow

of these programs, more projects are on the way.

But, donors didn't focus solely on establishing community gardens or integrated farms. Traditional herdsmen and cattle farmers were also assisted with the wide distribution of nutritional supplements for cattle.

For Zoulfa, a refugee living in the M'Béra camp, the high quality animal food supplements that were distributed will allow her to save money and be-

“My cattle are safe and can be vaccinated without any problems.”

*Daoud Ag Ahmedou,
farmer from a village near
M'Béra*

come more independent.

“The animal feed I received from IOM will help increase the amount of milk produced by my dairy goats. The cattle food is also good and will allow me to save the money that I was using to buy it”, Zoulfa said.

Concerned with limiting the spread of animal diseases, IOM constructed a vaccination park and provided veterinary care (including vaccination and deworming) to more than

20,000 cattle.

Daoud, a farmer in a village near the M'Béra camp, was particularly pleased with the construction of the new vaccination park.

“[It] came at the right time,” Daoud said. “We did not have a good place to keep our livestock for vaccination. We used to have a wooden enclosure but now with this new park, our cattle are safe and can be vaccinated without any problems.”

Additionally, a modern slaughterhouse was constructed near the M'Béra Refugee Camp to encourage healthy farming practices, increase cleanliness and limit the spread of diseases.

IOM, through the help and vision of its donors, has managed other projects to help stabilise the communities of the drought-stricken region. In addition to environmental programs, such as the distribution of more than 2,000 trees and saplings to help limit the impact of the desertification, IOM also distributed agricultural



Items sold in a market in M'Béra.

©IOM/F. Giordani

toolkits to area farmers to help improve output and efficiency of their crops.

IOM is also working to bring communities together and educate women to help broaden their economic opportunities.

In one project, more than 50 women were trained in compost making, farming techniques and financial literacy to foster resiliency and life-long learning. By strengthening the economic independence of its beneficiaries through education and empowerment, these women will have the tools to become self-sufficient and resilient.

Another unique program implemented by IOM brings refugees, migrants, and host communities together to talk about their differences and work out grievances. These “Mixed Committees” have been set up in target communities to increase mutual understanding between local community members and refugees. So far, more than 25,000 people in 22 villages and the refugee camp have benefitted from these projects since being implemented in 2013.

Looking Ahead

While the prompt intervention of IOM and its partners has greatly contributed to limiting the impact of the humanitarian crisis in southeast Mauritania, the stress placed on the region by the inflow of Malian refugees, combined with the growing degradation of the environment due to harsh cli-



A village elder from Dioweinkara, in southeast Mauritania, display crops grown by the women of the village.

©IOM/M. Boyd

matic conditions and the lack of adequate waste management facilities, remains worrying.

Sadly, even with several international agencies conducting effective humanitarian programming throughout the region, more funding is needed to sustain progress. Drought continues to plague the region, more refugees and migrants arrive each day, and the environmental impact of the multitude of people and livestock living in an area already suffer-

ing from scarce and dwindling resources require additional funding to avoid an even more urgent humanitarian situation. As well, the peaceful coexistence of refugees and locals hangs in a balance. A recent monitoring mission revealed local residents’ discontent at the protracted settlement of refugees in and around their villages and the impact it has had on their livelihoods. This discontent is aggravated by the increasing number of Mauritians who have

lost their refugee status and have had to integrate surrounding villages since they no longer benefit from the assistance in the M’Béra Refugee Camp.

IOM remains strongly committed to peaceful and sustainable management of the humanitarian situation in the Hodh El Chargui region but it needs the help and continued funding of its international donors and partners to continue progress on the vital efforts already made to address the sustained humanitarian crisis affecting southeast Mauritania.

IOM thanks its donors for their trust in the implementation of these projects:



MINISTERO
DELL’INTERNO



From
the People of Japan



United Nations
CERF

Central
Emergency
Response
Fund



Participants - including representatives from the Government of Japan, regional IOM missions, and observers from the Chadian police, take a group photo after the regional meeting on Feb.9, 2016. The meeting's objective was to review the progress of the implementation of an integrated regional border management strategy. ©IOM/M. Boyd

Regional meeting of border police directors

As part of a regional project to improve and coordinate border management in the Sahel, IOM invited regional border police directors from Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger as well as G5 Sahel representatives to meet with representatives from the Government of Japan and regional IOM missions, to discuss coordination efforts, on February 9, 2016 in Nouakchott.

The meeting's objective was to assess the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations of the first regional meeting held in Dakar, Senegal, on November 17, 2015, and plan the next steps towards

stronger regional cooperation.

Questions regarding the creation of an information exchange platform between the directors, the humanitarian management of borders and a stronger cooperation between border communities were addressed during the meeting. On their part, G5 Sahel countries stressed the importance of the sustainability of such activities.

The project funded by Japan aims at strengthening regional security and stability in the Sahel by consolidating the operational and strategic capabilities of the G5 Sahel and promoting a regional approach to migration and border management. A regional migration and border management approach will, among other things, permit the mapping of all operational border posts in Mauritania and strengthen the capacities of border patrol officers of in the countries covered by the project.



The countries covered by the project. The regional project aims at strengthening regional security and stability in the Sahel by promoting a regional approach to migration and border management. ©IOM

This project is funded by the Government of Japan:



From the People of Japan

IOM Mauritania launches a mapping project for the Mauritanian diaspora

On February 12, 2016, IOM Mauritania unveiled a new project that will allow the Mauritanian government to collect reliable data on the Mauritanian diaspora in the world.

The 16-month, USD \$100,000 project funded by the IOM Development Fund aims at facilitating the collection of reliable and detailed data on members of the Mauritanian diaspora across the world in order to better understand its de-

mographics, its profile and its willingness to invest in Mauritania. The project will also help the government to develop effective outreach methods for Mauritanians living abroad.

Information currently available to the government on the Mauritanian diaspora is incomplete, dispersed in multiple databases, and does not allow the government to effectively interact with Mauritanians living abroad. This project will correct that shortfall by developing a unified database.

The first phase of the project will enable consultants and information technology experts to develop effective systems to assist the Mauritanian government to identify and interact with members of the diaspora. During its second phase, IOM will support the Mauritanian government in initiating outreach efforts with its citizens living abroad, encouraging them to provide demographic information and also to invest in Mauritania.

IOM Mauritania assists migrants with voluntary return

Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) is a crucial component of migration management aiming at a humane and sustainable return and reintegration of migrants who cannot or do not wish to stay in their host countries, and desire to return to their countries of origin. Beneficiaries of IOM's assistance include individuals whose application for asylum was rejected or withdrawn, stranded migrants, victims of trafficking, and other vulnerable groups, including unaccompanied migrant children, or those with health-related needs. In collaboration with governments and civil society groups in both host countries and countries of origin, IOM assists these migrants who wish to return and reintegrate voluntarily into their communities and countries of origin.

Thanks to co-funding from the Government of Spain and the European Union, IOM Mauritania has been piloting its first AVRR programme since January 2016. The primary objective of the programme is to assist up to 60 migrants in irregular situations in Mauritania to return to their countries of origin. The programme will

provide funding for transportation and also provide assistance to help migrants to reintegrate in their countries of origin.

The successful implementation of this AVRR programme will require the cooperation and participation of a broad range of actors, including the migrants, civil society organizations, the governments and IOM country offices in both host countries and countries of origin.



Seydou Kulibali, a Malian migrant living in Mauritania.
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The IOM Mauritania Newsletter is a quarterly publication by the IOM mission in Mauritania for the public and for updates on IOM's projects in Mauritania.

For more information on IOM's projects in Mauritania, please contact us at iomnouakchott@iom.int

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