



المنظمة الدولية للهجرة  
وكالة الأمم المتحدة للهجرة

International Organization for Migration  
The UN Migration Agency

# IOM MAURITANIA

NEWSLETTER N°9 - October 2017 / January 2018







# IOM SNAPSHOT

Established in 1951, IOM is the main United Nations Agency for migrations.

**169**

Member States  
and 8 observer  
states

**401**

Office  
All over the world

**10000**

Staff  
97% on the field

**2**

special liaison offices  
New York  
Addis-Abeba

**2**

administrative  
centres  
Manilla  
Panama

**9**

Regional  
offices  
Bangkok  
Brussels  
Buenos Aires  
Cairo  
Dakar  
Nairobi  
Pretoria  
San José  
Vienna

**1710**

Active projects

around the world with a budget over  
1,5 billion USD

Headquarter  
**Geneva**

## IOM MISSION IN MAURITANIA

The Headquarters Agreement between the International Organisation for Migration and the Mauritanian government was signed on the 15th of July 2007 in Geneva, then ratified on the 7th of July 2008.

Based in Nouakchott, with two sub offices – in Bassikounou and Selibaby – IOM Mauritania is working in a close collaboration with the Mauritanian Government and other partners to strengthen the national migration management capacities and support migrants and host communities in the country.

The mission is structured around three main areas of interventions:

**MIGRANTS ASSISTANCE**

**BORDER MANAGEMENT**

**COMMUNITY STABILISATION**

▼ ► Area and geographical location of Mauritania.



## CELEBRATING INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS' DAY

As part of the International Migrants Day, which takes place each year on the 18<sup>th</sup> December, **IOM organized several activities in Nouakchott, Nouadhibou, Sélibabi and Bassikounou. Sensitisations, workshops, film screenings, interventions in schools, debates, photo exhibitions, concerts, and culinary workshops...** brought together the migrant population, Mauritanian communities, Mauritanian government as well as representatives of the UN agencies to celebrate this event.

In each city, cultural and participative activities were organized. The screening of the film «DemDem»; the Jury's special prize for the second edition of **the International Film Festival on Migration** has allowed to entertain and raise awareness on the theme of migration. Participants' taste buds were filled with sensations of multicultural dishes prepared by members of different

migrant communities. A photo exhibition at the National Museum of Nouakchott presented the activities and beneficiaries of IOM Mauritania.

In Nouadhibou, two general practitioners, a pediatrician and a gynecologist, **received more than 100 persons in a dispensary of the Regional Directorate of Health and Social Affairs for free medical consultations**, afterwards, medicines were distributed. A sanitation operation took place at Robinet 4 Market. Migrants and residents of Nouadhibou worked together to clean up the premises. These citizen actions have helped **to raise everyone's awareness on important issues related to hygiene and public health.**

These activities were jointly funded by the Federal Republic of Germany, USAID, the European Union and the Government of Japan.







## DIRECT ASSISTANCE OF 1000 MIGRANTS STRANDED OR IN TRANSIT

Being one of the migratory routes used daily by thousands of persons on the move, Mauritania gather migrants in transit or blocked, most often living in a very precarious economic and social situation.

To help the Mauritanian authorities cope with this situation and help these vulnerable migrants, IOM, **in the framework of the implementation of the joint initiative European Union Trust Fund -IOM for the protection of migrants**, intends to assist 1000 migrants stranded or in transit through a tender that has been launched for the recruitment of social partners to provide medical, psycho-social, housing, nutrition and non-food items assistance.

Thus, through these future partners, **1,000 vulnerable migrants will be able to benefit from health care, temporary accommodation, basic kits and nutrition.**

## AVRR SUMMARY OCTOBER 2017 / JANUARY 2018

Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration

RETURNS FROM MAURITANIA **68**



SIERRA LEONE

**20**



IVORY COAST

**18**



GUINEA

**13**



CAMEROON

**10**



SENEGAL

**7**



TOGO

**2**



CONGO

**2**

### OVERALL STATISTICS ON RETURN FOR 2017

CUMUL OF RETURNS

**TO**

MAURITANIA

**19**

CUMUL OF RETURNS

**FROM**

MAURITANIA

**212**

# NATIONALIZATION OF STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION ASSISTANCE

IOM organized a major consultation meeting for adaptation to the Mauritanian national context of the Standard Operating Procedures for Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration. This is part of the EUTF-IOM Joint Initiative for the Protection and Reintegration of Migrants in Africa, **which supports the efforts of African target countries along the central Mediterranean migration routes, with a view to strengthening migration and migration governance, to respond to the urgent needs of protecting migrants.**

This meeting's goal was to finalize the process of nationalizing the standard operating procedures developed with the aim of creating a common understanding and ensuring a comprehensive and coherent approach to support the protection and reintegration of returnees.

The main stakeholders involved in assisted voluntary return and reintegration in Mauritania included: diplomatic representations, private sector, administrative authorities and social partners. During this consultation, each partner, according to their area of intervention, highlighted the different points and aspects of the standard operating procedures framework to be adapted to the Mauritanian context.

At the end of this consultation, and thanks to the contribution of these stakeholders, a standard operating procedure framework specific to the Mauritanian context was adopted, and each actor involved in the implementation of the return process of migrants was built on the importance of its collaboration and its field of intervention in the said process.





## AICHA, A MALIAN BUSINESSWOMAN IN NEMA

From Bassikounou to Nema, everyone knows Aicha, a Malian migrant who has managed to take her life in hand to empower herself despite a personal injury. She is now managing the only caterer in the city of Néma. We met her in her shop when she was receiving goods from Guinea.

Aicha was 14 years old when she married a 35-year-old Mauritanian. **«We needed the security of a man to protect my mother and I. We were alone in the world. When he asked for my hand, I agreed»** She tells us.

At the age of 20, the age where most young women discover love, Aicha loses it. She finds herself divorced with a son to take care of. Her husband has made a new life. **«I was devastated. I didn't know what to do. And then I came out of my house, and I told myself that I was not going back without having something to feed my son».**

She became a housekeeper, seller of donuts then sandwiches,

this illiterate woman had endurance and strenght to succeed t to ensure the future of her son and not to disappoint her mother. **«I went to Guinea alone to buy goods»** she announced proudly.

It is by selling sandwiches that she met a humanitarian worker; working for the United Nations. This worker complained of the lack of restaurants in Nema. Aicha then asked him **«How many people are you? I can cook every day for you if you want».**

She started cooking for 10, 20 and then 100 people! She became a caterer, working with all the NGOs or organizations present in the city of Néma. She also moved to Bassikounou and the surrounding villages.

**«People choose what they want and I cook. I hired 2 more people, we are a tight group.**

**I also opened a shop in the market where I sell Guinean clothes. By the grace of God, I am independent. I have my house and my son goes to school».**





# PROTECTING MIGRANT CHILDREN IN WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA

The project «Protecting migrant children in West and Central Africa» funded by the Kingdom of Sweden **aims to assist children on the move in Mauritania.**

The main activities included training on child protection and assistance, assistance for the voluntary return of unaccompanied children and medical assistance for talibee children.

Three days of **free medical visits in 7 Mahadras were organized** in December. Nearly 550 talibé children and close neighbours of the Mahadras were able to benefit from medical examinations provided by dentists, pediatricians and general practitioners.

IOM Mauritania wishes to thank the Kingdom of Sweden for its support throughout this pilot project.



## ASSISTANCE IN THE MAHADRAS

The project «Increase local response capacity in Mauritania to assist stranded and vulnerable migrants through health, legal and reintegration support» funded by the European Union is working on 3 main activities: **support to 7 Koranic schools spread in Nouakchott, the organization of trainings in several cities in Mauritania, and the implementation of a referral mechanism.**

The rehabilitation of the 7 Mahadras was one of the main activities of the project during the end of 2017. **In partnership with the Association of Ulema of Mauritania (RABITA), these rehabilitations aim at improving the living conditions of 457 talibé children.** Five of the seven rehabilitations have already been finalised, one of these now has a subscription to the public water system.

On the other hand, **two new food distributions** in partnership with the Association des Femmes Chefs de Familles (AFCF) were carried out. It is planned to continue the distributions for the coming months.



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## TRAINING ACTIVITIES

**24**  
**TRAININGS**

**5**  
**CITIES**

**200**  
**PARTICIPANTS**

### THEMATICS

COMBATting TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS AND THE  
SMUGGLING OF MIGRANTS

MIGRATION AND PROTECTION

PROTECTION OF CHILDREN IN SITUATIONS OF MOBILITY

IDENTIFICATION OF VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING AND  
THE FIGHT AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION LAW

THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK TO COMBAT TRAFFICKING IN  
PERSONS AND THE SMUGGLING OF MIGRANTS

### 5 NEW COLLABORATIONS



**UNHCR**  
L'Agence des Nations  
Unies pour les réfugiés



**MINISTRY OF JUSTICE**

**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS CHILDHOOD  
AND MOTHERHOOD**

**NATIONAL SCHOOL FOR ADMINISTRATION  
JOURNALISM AND MAGISTRATURE**

## REFERRAL SYSTEM

The 6<sup>th</sup> round table of the referral system was organized in December. Set up with the aim of creating a referral system that facilitates the protection of migrants, these round tables allow partner organizations such as the Mauritanian government, national and international civil society, community leaders and embassy representatives **to strengthen coordination between them, to establish a fluid collaboration, and to better identify the assistance offered by each member of the referral mechanism.**

An advance in the making of the system has been noted thanks to the establishment of a group activity to involve more partners.

This method allowed to better clarify the mandates and responsibilities of the partners of the same field while aiming for a system of work and internal referencing to each subgroup.

**These activities are dedicated to producing a migrant guide to provide all the information needed to make their lives easier.**





# CLOSURE OF THE PROJECT

## «UNDERSTANDING AND COMBATING TRAFFICKING IN MAURITANIA»

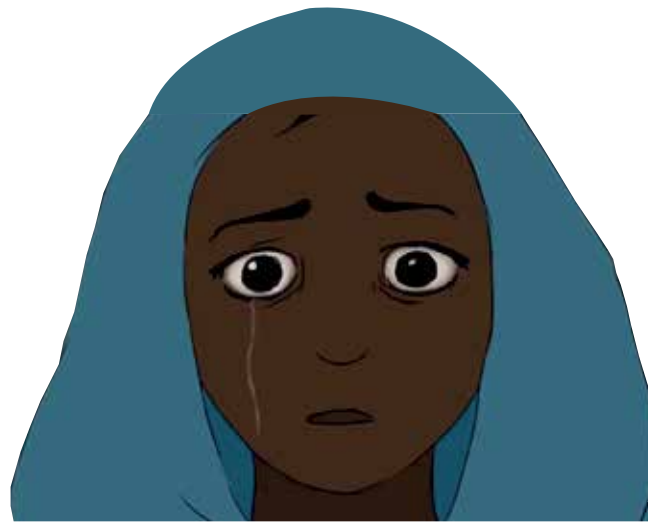
On February 13, 2018, the project «Understanding and Combating Trafficking in Persons in Mauritania - Phase 3», started a year earlier, will be completed, which would not have been possible without the generous funding of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Since 2015, IOM has implemented Phases 1 and 2 of the project, **which have not only provided a better understanding of the sources, characteristics and impacts of human trafficking in the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, also, to put in place a particularly effective awareness campaign on trafficking in human beings.**

This third phase, initiated in February 2017, was based on a multidimensional approach, focused on prevention, protection and prosecution, in order to sensitize the most vulnerable populations, to fight against the phenomenon of human trafficking, but also to ensure that victims of trafficking are protected and assisted.

A training in migrant rights in Sélibaby for the benefit of civil society and migrant associations, a basic training in literacy, English language, computer science in Nouakchott and a sewing one in Nouadhibou. Also, a training on identification and assistance to victims of trafficking for health services, airlines and representatives of the diplomatic corps, talks about human trafficking in suburban areas of Nouakchott - are just some of the activities that animated this project.

Thus, this project was not only **distinguished by the diversified and innovative nature of organized activities, but also by a growing regionalisation (Nouakchott, Nouadhibou, Sélibaby, Kiffa, Bassikounou).** Finally, it had the merit of strengthening collaboration between the Government of Mauritania, civil society organizations (CSOs) as well as United Nations agencies and migrant communities.



“Parce que nous sommes tous humains”



## PORTRAIT / MOHAMED BECHIR H'MEIDA

«Our interlocutor within the Mauritanian police for border management for many years!»

Bechir joined the police thirty years ago. He first worked in a neighbourhood police station before joining the Regional Direction of Security of Nouakchott. For 15 years, he has worked in the Territorial Direction of Surveillance of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania. Today, Bechir is Brigadier -Chief, head of the Document Fraud Office and the Risk Analysis Cell (RAC).

Bechir's professional life is divided between the management of the RAC; composed of four agents who gather and analyse the information coming from the border posts, the analysis of the documents that pass through his office for the detection of fraud and the collaboration with international partners such as IOM.

From the first steps of IOM Mauritania, Bechir appeared as an available, dynamic and responsive interlocutor within the Mauritanian police. He was present at the first IOM training on migration management in 2006. Since then, Bechir has participated in more than fifteen different activities as part of the collaboration between the police and IOM.

He then became a trainer for bilateral trainings on border management in neighboring villages and Nouakchott, as well as for training on the financing of terrorism and money laundering, he also

took part in visits and evaluations of border posts, etc. The resume of cooperation between Bechir and IOM is impressive!

«Bechir is a perfect example of direct collaboration with our governmental partners. He is a long-term partner of IOM and a key resource, thanks to his long experience in the police and his mastery of French, Hassaniya, Wolof and Poulaar» says Tomoko Sato, Project Manager at IOM Mauritania.

Among all these experiences, Bechir remembers in particular the first bilateral trainings that he led on border management in April and June 2016 in Ayoun and Sélibaby, towns near the Malian border. For two weeks, he trained twenty Mauritanian and Malian police officers on humanitarian border management, detection of false documents and combatting trafficking in human beings.

«It is very important for me to train my police colleagues and our Malian counterparts on a bilateral basis, which allows us to open the professional dialogue between agents who weren't used to communicating between themselves or only a little before» explains Béchir.

«Today, despite the great improvements observed, the need for training and raising awareness among the police remain. I therefore wish to continue working with IOM and to thank the mission for its continuous support to the Mauritanian police» concludes Béchir.





# CHILDREN'S AWARENESS WORKSHOP

## «LET'S THINK - TALK - IMAGINE» FOR PEACE

«Building a barrier of vivid peace images against violent and radical messages and promoting peace between Mauritians and Malians is the goal of this workshop» says IOM project manager Tomoko Sato.

IOM organized a peace awareness workshop for children in Mbérra camp and Bassikounou schools to understand the importance of daily actions to protect peace and pacific coexistence among communities. Malian and Mauritanian students from different schools were able to identify peaceful keywords and related drawings and scripts. The children were very proactive and dynamic and, for example, spoke about welcoming, caring and hospitality of migrants.

**«When I work in the school garden, help**

**other students with their homework and play with others, it's about sharing and solidarity»** says Fatou\*, a 12-year-old Bassikounou student.

Mohamed\* is very happy with this awareness dedicated to peace. 5th grade, Malian and refugee with his family in the camp, he **«hopes that one day there will be peace in Mali so that his parents and him, can return to their country».**

Thus, the students understood through this workshop the get-together and the acceptance of the other and promised to share these assets with their family and their classmates.

In addition, based on selected and illustrated themes, a teaching tool on peace and intercommunity exchange

will be created and disseminated to local communities and refugees in schools. This sensitisation workshop also brought together parents, teachers, school directors, the Departmental Inspector of National Education and other partners. All the participants greatly appreciated this activity which constitutes the first peace awareness workshop in the schools of the commune of Bassikounou and the camp of Mbérra, and wished to renew it.

This activity is part of the project «Strengthening the capacity of fighting against the irregular migration and organized crime in Mauritania Phase II» funded by the Government of Japan.

*\* the first name was changed*



## 2 HENHOUSES IN THE MBERA MALIAN REFUGEE CAMP

To help empower refugee women in M'bera camp, IOM has set up two henhouses for 44 vulnerable beneficiaries. Each henhouse was equipped with 500 chicks and their feeding for 45 days.

After this time, the chicks become chickens with an average weight of 2.5 kilograms and are resold at 250 MRU (about 7 dollars). An important income that allows refugee women to diversify their diet and make small savings. **«Since the arrival of the chickens, we have an activity that occupies us and help us generate income that is useful for our needs»** said Fatma, one of the beneficiaries.

In order to enable them to properly manage the henhouse financials and ensure their continuity, beneficiaries have also been trained in basic management and organization.

These activities are funded by the American Government.



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## 2 WATER SUPPLY NETWORKS IN NÉRÉ AND KLEIVA IN THE HODH CHARGUI

Thanks to these new infrastructures, the inhabitants of the villages of Néré and Kleiva, 320 households (about 2240 people) will finally have access to water for human consumption, watering animals and irrigation of the fields.

**«And not only - continues the head of the village of Néré - the city of Fassala (more than 15,000 people) who is less than 5 kilometers away, also waters at our village, especially during the summer months. Not to mention the thousands of cattle coming from Mali».**

In this region of the Hodh Chargui, access to water comes on the top of the priorities and concerns of the people because everything depends on it, especially the survival of the livestock which is the main source of income.

These activities are funded by the American Government.



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## THE ANNUAL ACTION PLAN ANCHORS THE EMELI PROJECT ON SOLID FOUNDATIONS

The first steering committee of the project «Empowering Mauritanian youth through education, leadership and self-improvement» (EMELI) was held in early December at INAP-FTP.

**Gathered around a project dedicated to young people, a large panel of experts from all fields was able to work together on the action plan for the first year of implementation of the project** (Oct. 2017 - Sept. 2018). Discussions focused on the professional training of young people in the Mahadras Professional Training Center (MPTC) in Nouakchott provided as part of the project and the creation of a cultural and exchange center for the youth in a peripheral neighbourhood of the capital.

Following the validation of the action plan during this first steering committee, IOM will launch tenders for the selection of a consulting firm to conduct a global and in-depth diagnostic

mission for the MPTC that will allow identify the needs in term of training, equipment and infrastructure. Needs that the project will meet in order to **guarantee targeted young people a quality professional training allowing them to have a full and sustainable integration in the professional world.**

Promoting the expression of young people is one of the founding axes of the project. Following the validation of the action plan, IOM will launch a tender to find the youth organization with which, to work for the launch of the cultural and exchange center.

This project is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).



# QUANTITATIVE PROJECT OBJECTIVES

## OCTOBER 2017 TO SEPTEMBER 2018

### PROMOTING YOUTH EXPRESSION

20 activities implemented in the Cultural and Exchange Center for Young People

### TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL INSERTION

150 young people trained  
70% men  
30% women

Training in personal development:  
200 young people trained  
70% men  
30% women



Training and awareness of influential people (Ulema, journalists etc.): 60 influential people  
70% men  
30% women

Small business creation:  
20 companies created  
70% by men  
30% by women

## VISIT OF BORDER POSTS IN SOUTHERN MAURITANIA, IN THE TRARZA REGION

Under the EU-TF Initiative for «Strengthening Border Management, Protection and Reintegration of Migrants», IOM conducts field missions **to verify the status of posts on the southern border of the country. Mauritania, including the condition of equipment and buildings.**

During the month of December 2017, IOM members traveled to the border posts at Leixeiba II, Diama and Rosso, accompanied by a representative of the Mauritanian Police and an international expert. **This visit made it possible to make an inventory of the infrastructures and equipments available for the agents of the Mauritanian Police.**

Based on this visit, proposals will be made jointly with the State services in order to perpetuate the good practices of maintenance of buildings and equipment. In addition, this new project funded by the European Union and implemented in 14 countries\*, also provides for the construction and rehabilitation of 6 new border posts, the creation of a coordination center, as well as the training of 300 affected officers at border posts.

*1 - Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Ivory Coast, , Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, The Gambia.*





## IOM, KEY PARTNER OF THE 28<sup>TH</sup> EDITION OF SAFRA IN SELIBABY

IOM, through its project «Strengthening Border Management, Protection and Reintegration of Migrants» funded by the European Union, accompanied the city of Sélibaby from 2 to 7 January 2018 for the 28<sup>th</sup> edition of SAFRA ( Week of Friendship and Fraternity).

**Participants from six countries (Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Conakry, Mali, Mauritania, Senegal and The Gambia) exchanged views over five days on the theme of irregular migration and youth employment through workshops and cultural and sporting activities.** On this occasion, Sélibaby, a city located in the south of the country and bordering Mali and Senegal, welcomed more than 600 people.

The official launch took place under the chairmanship of the Mauritanian Minister of Culture, and brought together many government actors such as Governors, Mayors, members of the Coordination Office, Local Committees as well as various delegations from cities in member countries. of SAFRA.

IOM members facilitated a regional workshop to which governors and elected officials from member countries participated. The presentation of the project and its various components aroused the interest of many participants. **This event enabled us to engage in fruitful and relevant dialogues for the reinforcement of the common strategy of the SAFRA countries, especially in the circulation and exchange of young people and investment in economic projects of different natures.** The question of establishing a common training center for the six countries was also raised.



## 1131 INSPIRING DAYS IN MAURITANIA:

1131 days is a long time and yet it went by in a heartbeat. When I first arrived at IOM Mauritania on November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2014 IOM was an independent intergovernmental agency; the mission was small and largely focused on integrated border management.

**In the course of those three years, IOM has become a related UN agency, the mission has grown from 6 to 52 staff members, we have opened a third presence in Selibaby (besides the offices in Nouakchott and Bassikounou, which already existed) and we have been able to enlarge the portfolio.**

This important growth of the mission was a beautiful thing to see and live on a daily basis. More importantly, there has been an important diversification of our areas of intervention. While traditionally the mission worked primarily on Integrated Border Management (IBM), nowadays, we touch upon more areas such as human trafficking, migrants' protection and Migration and Development and diaspora.

**This allowed us to build more and more partnerships with a diversity of government counterparts, but also all type of actors that are working on migration directly or indirectly, allowing us to unite the various actors and enable them to converge their efforts and maximize the efficiency of the many services offered to vulnerable migrants.**

I hope that the development that I've witnessed within the mission would have put in place the foundation for a continuity of the work with our partners, also, I hope to see an even more consolidated coordination with the sister agencies from the UN System, more collaboration between the government and civil society concerning migration topics, as well as close collaboration with media and researchers.

**I am thankful for having been able to spend 1131 inspiring days in Mauritania, which has taught me a lot and which I will always fondly remember – because of its beauty, its hospitality, its culture, but also for its many challenges.**

*By Anke Strauss, Chief of Mission IOM Mauritania from November 2014 to December 2017.*



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The IOM team welcomes new staff members:

SOPHIE CALMETTES

LUCILE CEGLARSKI

ALASSANE DEMBELE

FATIMA DIACKO

MARIE GIBRAT

YANNE NOUROUMBY

MARIUS TADA BLOUM

MARIEM ZEMRAGUI





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OUR ACKNOWLEDGMENTS TO ALL OUR DONORS

