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## **Law Enforcement Training for Capacity Building**

### **MAURITANIA**

### **Downloadable Country Booklet**

### **DL. 2.5**

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# **Mauritania**

## **Country Information Package**

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**Within the framework of LET4CAP and with the financial support to the Internal Security Fund of the EU**

LET4CAP aims to contribute to more *consistent* and *efficient* assistance in law enforcement capacity building to third countries. The Project consists in the design and provision of training interventions drawn on the experience of the partners and fine-tuned after a piloting and consolidation phase.

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# **1. Country Profile**

## 1.1 Country in Brief



**Formal Name:** Islamic Republic of Mauritania

**Previous formal names:** Mauretania, French West Africa

**Population:** 4,301,018

**Term for Citizens:** Mauritanian

**Area (sq km):** 1,030,000 km<sup>2</sup>

**Capital City:** Nouakchott

**Independence:** from France, 28 November 1960

## 1.2 Modern and Contemporary History of Mauritania

### *Early History*

Given its geographical location next to the Atlantic coast and at the western edge of the desert, Mauritania experienced many waves of migrants and conquerors. In the classical antiquity, the country we know nowadays was a dry savannah area where independent tribes (like the Pharusii and the Perorsi) lived a seminomadic life. Also Romans did explorations in the territory and their principal activity was commerce.

At the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century Berbers moved to the southern part of the country; while in the 8<sup>th</sup> century Arabs conquered the western Maghreb and slowly entered the territory of Mauritania. The growing Arab presence pushed the Berbers to the south of the country, where its black inhabitants were forced out. In the 9<sup>th</sup> century the Sanhadja Confederation attained political influence in the Adrar and Hodh regions. Hence, until the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, the Sanhadja Confederation was a decentralized polity based on two different groups, the Berbers and the Muslim, and commerce advanced in the country. By the 11<sup>th</sup> century, Islam had spread in the Western Sahara given the influence of Berber and Arab traders, and Arab migrants that occasionally reached the territory. In the same period, however, the Almoravids conquered the area and started a process of divulgation of an austere form of Islam from the Sahara through North Africa. The Almoravid Empire, at that time, controlled a vast territory stretching from Spain to Senegal. The main commercial routes that connected the empires in Morocco with the south passed through Mauritania. In the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century a 30 years long conflict erupted: the “Char Bouba war”. It was fought between the Sanhadja Berber tribes (the confederation that played a key role in the formation of the Almoravid dynasty) and the Maqil Arab immigrant tribes, foremost of which was the Beni Hassan. The conflict resulted in the defeat of the Berber tribes, hence the dominance of the Arab tribes and the arabization of Mauritania and Western Sahara. The Char Bouba war became a reference point for deciding the political and social status of the southern Sahara.

### *European intervention and French colonization*

In 1442 Portuguese marines rounded Cape Blanco and in 1448 founded the fort of Arguin from where they derived gold, gum Arabic and slaves. Spanish, Dutch, English and French all competed to access this trade, and with the European treaties in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century much of the Saharan coast was ceded to the French. The history of French colonial policy in Mauritania is linked to that of the other French possessions in West Africa, Senegal in particular, on which Mauritania was politically, administratively and economically dependent. The French colonial policy in the country was of association and indirect rule: colonial administrators heavily relied on Islamic religious leaders and the traditional warrior groups to maintain their rule. Furthermore, not too many efforts were made to develop and sustain the economy of the country. During the colonial period, the population remained nomadic, but sedentary black Africans (whose ancestors had been expelled centuries earlier by the Moors) began to trickle back into southern Mauritania.

After World War II, Mauritania was involved in a number of reforms of the French colonial system in favour of administrative decentralization and internal autonomy. The political crisis in France gave birth to the French Fifth Republic in 1958 and to a new constitution. This new constitution, which was also adopted by Mauritania in a referendum, provided for a French Community whose members would be autonomous republics. Nonetheless, Mauritania decided to follow the wave of nationalism that was spreading in the African continent. Hence, in October 1958 the Islamic Republic of Mauritania was proclaimed and the Territorial Assembly changed its name to the Constituent Assembly and initiated work to draft a national constitution. Once the document was adopted, Mauritania declared its independence on 28 November 1960.

### *Post-independence period*

As the country gained independence, the capital city Nouakchott was founded in a small colonial village (the Ksar), while the rest of the population (90%) remained nomadic. Moreover, large numbers of ethnic Sub-Saharan Africans entered Mauritania and moved into the area north of the Senegal River. The small political elite that guided the movement for independence was divided over whether the country should be oriented toward Senegal and the French-speaking Africa or toward the Arab Morocco and the rest of the Arab world. Such dilemma was complicated by the fact that King Hassan II of Morocco temporarily occupied areas of Mauritania during the 1960s. Despite those differences, party leaders recognised the need to ensure the establishment of a strong, stable and independent government that was also able to represent the regional and ethnic diversity of the country. With this end, many put aside their differences and worked together to achieve this goal. In fact, in the elections held in August 1961, Moktar Ould Daddah won thanks to the support of the Mauritanian National Renaissance Party (Nahda) and the Mauritanian National Union. President Daddah was able to gain the support of numerous opposition parties as he demonstrated his willingness to include in his government those who had opposed him. The political direction under Ould Daddah was one of cautious balance between the country's African and Arab roots. The new government formed in September 1961, in fact, included representative of both Nahda and the Mauritanian National Union in key ministries. A few months later, the governmental coalition was formalized with the consolidation of the main political parties into the Mauritanian People's Party (PPM), then recognised as the sole legal party. In 1964 the PPM proclaimed Mauritania a one-party State and carried out a foreign policy of non-alignment with France. The political system became increasingly centralized in the hands of the PPM and started to clash with the highly diverse population. In particular, tensions started to emerge among the southern black population, as it feared Arab domination. These fears found ground in the 1966 when both Arabic and French became the official languages. The following years were characterised by strikes and demonstrations: students and trade unionists were complaining about linguistic and racial issues. The demonstrations were harshly repressed by the government, which had banned



discussions on racial problems. Further tensions erupted among black Maures as they were still considered part of the slave class, despite slavery had been outlawed by both the French and Mauritanian constitutions.

In 1969, after Morocco officially recognised the State of Mauritania, the government started to pursue a more radical political agenda in order to reduce its economic dependence on France. In 1973 Mauritania decided to leave the West Africa Monetary Union and the Franc Zone, and to introduce its own currency, the ouguiya. The year after the country joined the League of Arab States, while in 1975 Daddah presented a charter calling for an Islamic, national, centralist and socialist democracy. Such document was welcomed with great enthusiasm by almost all political parties, which decided to withdraw their opposition to the government.

In the 1970s, despite the achievements made in terms of national unity and economic independence, Mauritania had to move its attention from domestic to foreign issues.

#### *The issue of the Western Sahara*

The Spanish occupation of the Western Sahara (which started in 1884) ended in the 1975, when Spain bequeathed the territory to Morocco and Mauritania: under the Madrid Agreements, Morocco acquired the northern two-thirds of the territory, while Mauritania received the southern third. The following year Mauritanian troops occupied the territory, as provided by the Madrid Agreements, but they were challenged by the Polisario guerrillas (a Sahrawi rebel nation liberation movement aiming to end Moroccan presence in the Western Sahara) with who they started what was going to be a two-years war. In order to sustain the war, the country conducted impressive military build-up: Mauritania increased its Armed Forces from 3,000 in early 1976 to 17,000 in mid-1978; the government's expenditures increased by 64%, most of which was devoted to the defence sector; and a special defence tax was introduced. The fighting had an extremely negative impact on the already improvised economy and on the fragile societal equilibrium. Furthermore, Mauritania registered a high number of casualties during the war. The conflict was extremely challenging as Mauritania had to deal with more than 6,400 kilometres of undefended borders with Mali and Algeria and was highly vulnerable to the attacks of the Polisario guerrillas, who were armed by Algeria. The government was even unable to protect the capital, Nouakchott, which was attacked in June 1976. Moreover, the fear of Moroccan troops moving into Mauritania to interdict the guerrillas was spreading in the country.

The goal of Polisario strategists was to remove Mauritania from the conflict and to put all their efforts against the stronger Moroccan forces. Following this objective, in mid-1977 the Polisario launched a general offensive against Mauritania to debilitate its economy and foment internal opposition to the war, hoping that, as an overall consequence, the government would have withdrawn from the conflict. As the offensive got more intense, Mauritania requested aid from Morocco. The latter merged its military command with Mauritania's in June 1977 and 600 Moroccan troops entered the Mauritanian territory. Despite the military involvement of Morocco, the situation worsened and the government decided to ask aid from France. Six months later French Armed Forces began attacking Polisario guerrillas.

Mauritania also received help from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Abu Dhabi. Nonetheless, the country was not able to prevent the Polisario from bombarding Nouakchott again in July 1977. The event clearly shackled Daddah who reorganized the army and the government and appointed a military officer as Minister of Defence. By the end of the year, Daddah faced increasing opposition to the war and to his administration. In the military, black recruits from the south were not too interested in fighting in the North; while black civilians were reluctant to pay a tax to support a war between Arabs. Moreover, many Maure soldiers even sympathized with the objectives of the Polisario, as they shared ethnic ties. With no way out of the Western Sahara war, Daddah found himself increasingly isolated as he proved not to be able to undertake any diplomatic or political initiatives. In February 1978, Daddah appointed Colonel Mustapha Ould Salek as Army Commander, who five months later led a coup-d'état that overthrew the government. Thereafter, the Military Committee for National Recovery under Mustapha Ould Salek took power and began a pro-French and pro-Moroccan policy aimed at bringing peace to Mauritania: the Polisario declared a unilateral cease-fire, which the new government accepted. However, under Morocco's pressure, Salek opposed the creation of an independent state in Western Sahara and was not able to sign a peace agreement with the Polisario who became increasingly impatient and demanded the evacuation of Mauritanian troops from Tiris al Gharbiyya. The new leader was unable to impose himself and find a solution between the pressure coming from the two opposite sides. Also the French government realised the incapacity of Salek to untangle the country from the Moroccan deep influence and from the Western Sahara war. As an overall consequence to this situation, the government was overthrown on the 6<sup>th</sup> of April 1979 by Colonel Ahmed Ould Bouceif and Colonel Mohamed Khouna Haidalla, who formed the Military Committee for National Salvation. Nonetheless, Salek was able to remain in the government covering the position of a figurehead President. Only one year after, Bouceif died in an airplane crash, hence Haidalla was appointed as Prime Minister, while Colonel Mohamed Louly became the new President.

Also under the Haidalla rule, the government tried to negotiate peace with the Polisario, while maintaining ties with France and Morocco. For what concerns domestic policies, the government refused to share power either with black nor Maure civilians; moreover it decided to use Arabic solely in secondary schools. In August 1979 Haidalla signed a peace treaty in Algeria with Polisario after the latter ended its cease-fire the month before. According to the agreement, Mauritania renounced all territorial claims over the Western Sahara and recognised the Polisario as the sole legitimate representative of the people of Western Sahara; while the Polisario abstained from any claims regarding Mauritania. Moreover, Haidalla agreed to withdraw from Tiris al Gharbiyya, but it did not recognize the Polisario's governing arm, the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic. Despite Mauritania's efforts, a few days after the signature of the peace treaty, Morocco occupied Tiris al Gharbiyya, hence menacing the effectiveness of peace. In January 1980 Haidalla declared neutrality in the Western Sahara conflict and managed to get Moroccan troops out of the territory of Mauritania.

Internal problems in the country persisted, the southern black population viewed Haidalla with hostility as he was perceived as an Arab. Furthermore, pro-Moroccan political groups did not trust him as he signed the peace treaty with the Polisario. As a consequence to the actual situation, he removed pro-Moroccan and pro-Polisario factions from the top leader positions and assumed the title of President, thus ensuring that he would have had no political competitors. With the aim of gaining more support, Haidalla implemented a series of policies: he abolished slavery, he formed a civilian government with Ahmed Ould Bneijara as Prime Minister, and he started drafting a constitution for a multiparty and democratic State. Despite these changes, political opposition to Haidalla grew: in France the Alliance for Democratic Mauritania was formed with the aim to restore civilian rule and a multiparty democracy in the country. In March 1981, pro-Moroccan members of the Alliance attempted a coup d' état. Even though the coup failed, Haidalla decided to abandon the civilian rule and formed a six-member military government led by Colonel Maaouiya Ould Sid Ould Taya. In order to restore diplomatic relations with Morocco, Haidalla participated to a summit with King Hassan II hosted by Saudi Arabia. In that occasion, the two leaders signed an agreement restoring diplomatic relations and prohibiting the transit of both Armed Forces in either country. Nonetheless, the deal had a short life: King Hassan accused Mauritania of allowing Polisario guerrillas to launch attacks against Morocco from the Mauritanian territory; hence he ordered the bombardment of the city of Bir Aidiat, where the Polisario took refuge.

In February 1982 Haidalla survived a second coup attempt, and started a process of politicization of the population with the aim of abolishing the military regime and being elected as a civilian. Despite his willingness to focus on domestic matters, Haidalla had to deal with a coup plot supported by Libya and the Moroccan attack against a Mauritanian military post in the Western Sahara. The two episodes demonstrated the country's enduring vulnerability to different types of offensives. In an effort to deal with such difficulty, Haidalla strengthened his relations with France and Algeria. The most significant development took place in June 1983 during the meeting of the Organization of African Unity in Ethiopia, when Haidalla together with the Senegalese President and the Ethiopian leader drafted a resolution calling for a cease-fire and peace negotiations in the Western Sahara. As Morocco failed to comply with such solution, in February 1984 Mauritania recognised the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic.

The country continued to face a number of difficulties in the economic, political and military fields. In March 1984 Haidalla named himself Prime Minister, while Colonel Taya was appointed Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces. A few months later, while Haidalla was abroad, Taya, with a quiet coup d' état, became Mauritania's President. The following years were characterised by insurgencies of Mauritania's black populations. In April 1986 a book documenting the discriminations against black citizens was published and, as a consequence, 40 black intellectuals suspected of being involved in the publications were arrested and underwent brutal interrogations. Furthermore, authorities cracked down on black communities with arrests and intimidations. In October 1987 the government unveiled a tentative coup organised by black army officers apparently supported by Senegal. The officers accused of the plot were arrested and subjected to interrogation and torture,

three of them were sentenced to death, while eighteen to life imprisonment. Conflict within the Mauritanian society continued to emerge especially between the Arab and black groups. In April 1989 inter-communal disorder broke out as a Mauritania-Senegal border dispute escalated into violence. In the villages of the South, blacks were indiscriminately expelled and forced to Senegal; while in the larger cities, authorities targeted black civilians: tens of thousands of black Mauritians were expelled from the country and many of them remained in Senegal as refugees and formed the FLAM movement.

#### *From 1991 to nowadays*

The military rule formally ended in 1991 when opposition parties were legalized and a new constitution was approved. Nonetheless, both opposition groups and external observers dismissed the elections' victory of Taya as fraudulent. For what concerns foreign relations, in October 1999 Mauritanian and Israeli Foreign Ministers signed an agreement in Washington establishing diplomatic relations. Taya also began cooperating with the United States in anti-terrorism activities. This, however, was criticised as it was believed that Mauritania's issue with terrorism was being misrepresented for geopolitical means. In 2001 new elections were held and were guaranteed against fraud. Despite such intention, the opposition candidate, Haidalla, was arrested and Taya won taking 64 out of 81 seats. The 21<sup>st</sup> century was characterised by attempted military coups and unrest instigated by Islamist opponents. The Taya's regime faced the situation with heavy crackdowns and was highly criticised for not respecting human rights. Particularly relevant was the failed coup attempt of June 2003 carried out by a group which objected the imprisonment of Islamic leaders (in the wake of the US-led invasion of Iraq) and Taya's diplomatic relations with Israel. After a day of fighting, the coup was suppressed and a number of government officials were arrested. The coup leader, however, Saleh Ould Hanenna, was not captured. In November presidential elections were held and the incumbent President Taya was re-elected as he was contrasted by a very weak opposition.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August 2005 the Mauritanian military took advantage of the fact that Taya was out of the country and seized control of key points in Nouakchott. During the coup the officers released the following statement: "The national armed forces and security forces have unanimously decided to put a definitive end to the oppressive activities of the defunct authority, which our people have suffered from during the past years". As a result, Taya was never able to return to the country and still remains in exile. The new governing group called itself the Military Council for Justice and Democracy, released dissidents and approved a new constitution in June 2006. In the meantime Colonel Ely Ould Mohamed Vall was appointed as first leader. Only in March 2007 elections were held and Abdallahi was elected as the President. The same year, however, was sadly marked by the killing of four French tourists by Islamist militants.

The apparently stable political situation was shaken in January 2008 when six militants shot at the Israeli embassy in Nouakchott and a few months after, in August, when the Mauritanian President,

Prime Minister and the Interior Minister were arrested by Senior Mauritanian army officers and a group of high-ranking generals. The coup started with the announcement of Abdallahi on the morning of August 6, that he was firing several senior army officers, few hours later he was seized from his house by members of the Presidential Security Battalion. The leaders of the coup were recently fired officers in the Security Forces: General Abdel Aziz, General Muhammad Ould Al-Ghazwani and General Philippe Swikri. The day after the coup an official statement affirmed that Abdallahi's powers were terminated and Mauritania would be governed by an 11 member High Council of State, with Abdel Aziz as the President. The coup was welcomed with a demonstration, which took the street in Nouakchott in the 7<sup>th</sup> of August, nonetheless the same day was also the theatre of a protest against the coup. The new junta promised that a presidential election would have been held as soon as possible; in fact it was scheduled for June 2009. Abdel Aziz stepped down as President in April in order to candidate himself in the new elections. The opposition initially planned to boycott the election, but then it agreed to participate and make it appear more competitive. In July 2009 presidential elections were held and Abdel Aziz was declared winner with a 52% majority.

Among the remarkable events worth of notice, it is important to recall the constitutional referendum that was held on August 5, 2017. The referendum was proposed by President Abdel Aziz and his Union for the Republic Party, and included: changing the national flag and the national anthem, and abolishing the Mauritanian Senate. The referendum passed with an overwhelming majority and all the different constitutional amendments were officially adopted and enacted.

## 1.3 Geography

**Location:** Mauritania is a country in the Maghreb region of north-western Africa. It is the eleventh largest country in Africa.

**Area:** Mauritania's land area is 1,030,000 square kilometres, 90% of which is desert. It is the world's 29<sup>th</sup> largest country.

**Land Boundaries:** Mauritania borders with the Atlantic Ocean to the west, Morocco in the north, Algeria in the northeast, Mali in the east and southeast, and Senegal in the southwest. The country has a total of 5,074 km of land boundaries.

**Length of Coastline:** it extends approximately 754-kilometre long the Atlantic coast.

**Maritime Claims:** the territorial sea extends for 12 nautical miles, while the contiguous zone for 24 nautical miles. The continental shelf is of 200 nautical miles, while the exclusive economic zone extends for 200 nautical miles.

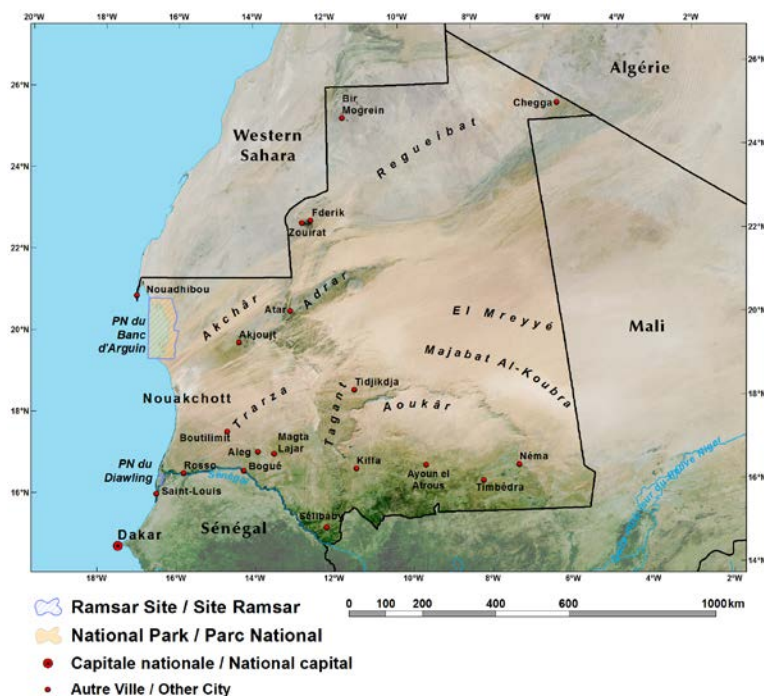
**Topography:** Mauritania is a vast and arid area occasionally broken by ridges and cliffs. A series of scarps face southwest, longitudinally bisecting the plains in the centre of the country.

These scarps also separate a group of sandstone plateaus, of which the highest is the Adrar Plateau (elevation of 500 metres). Spring-fed oases lie at the foot of some of the scarps; while isolated peaks, often rich in minerals, rise above the plateaus. Approximately three-fourths of Mauritania is desert or semi-desert. Belts of natural vegetation extend from east to west and range from traces of tropical forest along the Senegal River to brush and savannah in the southeast.

**Natural Resources:** iron ore, gypsum, copper, phosphate, diamonds, gold, oil, fish.

**Land Use:** the arable land in Mauritania is extremely scarce, it counts for 0.44%. The permanent crops solely represent 0.01%.

**Environmental Factors:** the main environmental concerns Mauritania has to deal with is the hot and dry weather, the sand-laden sirocco wind that blows primarily in March and April, and periodic drought. Moreover, the country is currently facing overgrazing, deforestation, and soil erosion that are together contributing to desertification. Hence, there are very limited natural fresh water resources.



Source: U.S. Geological Survey

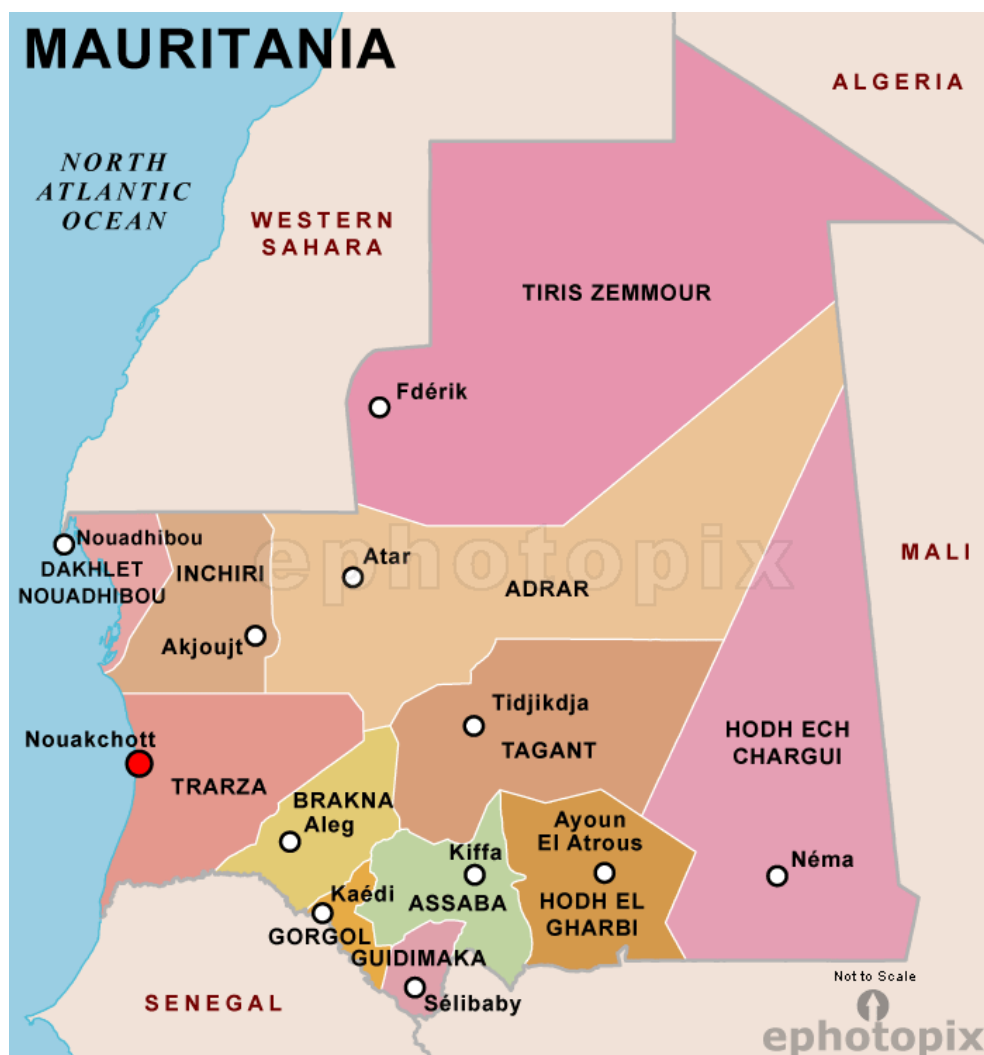
## 1.4 Territorial and Administrative Units

Mauritania is divided into 12 regions called “wilayah” and one capital district in Nouakchott, which in turn are subdivided into 44 departments “moughataa”.

Mauritania counts 216 communes.

*List of Mauritanian regions and capital district (in alphabetical order) and their capitals:*

- Adrar (region), Atar (capital)
- Assaba (region), Kiffa (capital)
- Bakna (region), Aleg (capital)
- Dakhlet Nouadhibou (region), Nouadhibou (capital)
- Gordol (region), Kaédi (capital)
- Guidimaka (region), Sélibaby (capital)
- Hodh Ech Chargui (region), Néma (capital)
- Hodh El Gharbi (region), Ayoun ed Atrous (capital)
- Inchiri (region), Akjoujt (capital)
- Nouakchott (capital district)
- Tagant (region), Tidjikdja (capital)
- Tiris Zemmour (region), F'dérik (capital)
- Trarza (region), Rosso (capital)





## 1.5 Population

According to 2018 estimates, Mauritania has a population of 4,514,493. The population density in the country is 4 per km<sup>2</sup>.

The population is not evenly distributed on the territory: with most of the country being a desert, vast areas of Mauritania, particularly in the central, northern, and eastern areas, are without sizeable population clusters. Half of the population lives in or around the coastal capital of Nouakchott; while smaller clusters are found near the southern border with Mali and Senegal. As of 2017, 61% of Mauritians live in urban areas. With a sustained total fertility

rate of about 4 children per woman and almost 60% of the population under the age of 25, Mauritania's population is likely to continue growing for the foreseeable future. According to 2017 estimates, the birth rate is 30.4 births/1,000 population; while the death rate is 7.9 deaths/1,000 population. The current population growth rate is set to 2.17%.



## 1.6 Ethnic Groups, Languages, Religion

### *Ethnic Groups*

The Mauritanian population is divided into three main ethnic groups: black Moors (Haratines), white Moors (Bidhan) and Sub-Saharan Mauritians. The Haratines constitute about 40% of the population. They are descendants of former slaves and speak Arabic. The Bidhan represent 30% of the citizens, they speak Hassaniya Arabic and are primarily of Arab-Berber origin. The remaining population mainly consists of various ethnic groups of West African descent, such as the Niger-Congo-speaking Halpulaar, Soninke, Bambara and Wolof.

Outmigration from Mauritania started in the 1970s and was driven by drought, unemployment and poverty. The first flows were directed toward other West African countries, such as Senegal, Mali, Gambia and Cote d'Ivoire. The Mauritania-Senegal conflict of 1989 forced thousands of black Mauritians to take refuge in Senegal and pushed labour migrants towards the Gulf, Libya and Europe in the period between 1980s and early 1990s. Mauritania has always accepted migrants since it gained independence in 1960 with the aim of filling labour shortages. More recently, the country has received refugees escaping civil wars, such as tens of thousands of Tuaregs who fled Mali in 2012.

Moreover, Mauritania has been an important transit point for sub-Saharan migrants moving illegally to North Africa and Europe.

### *Languages*

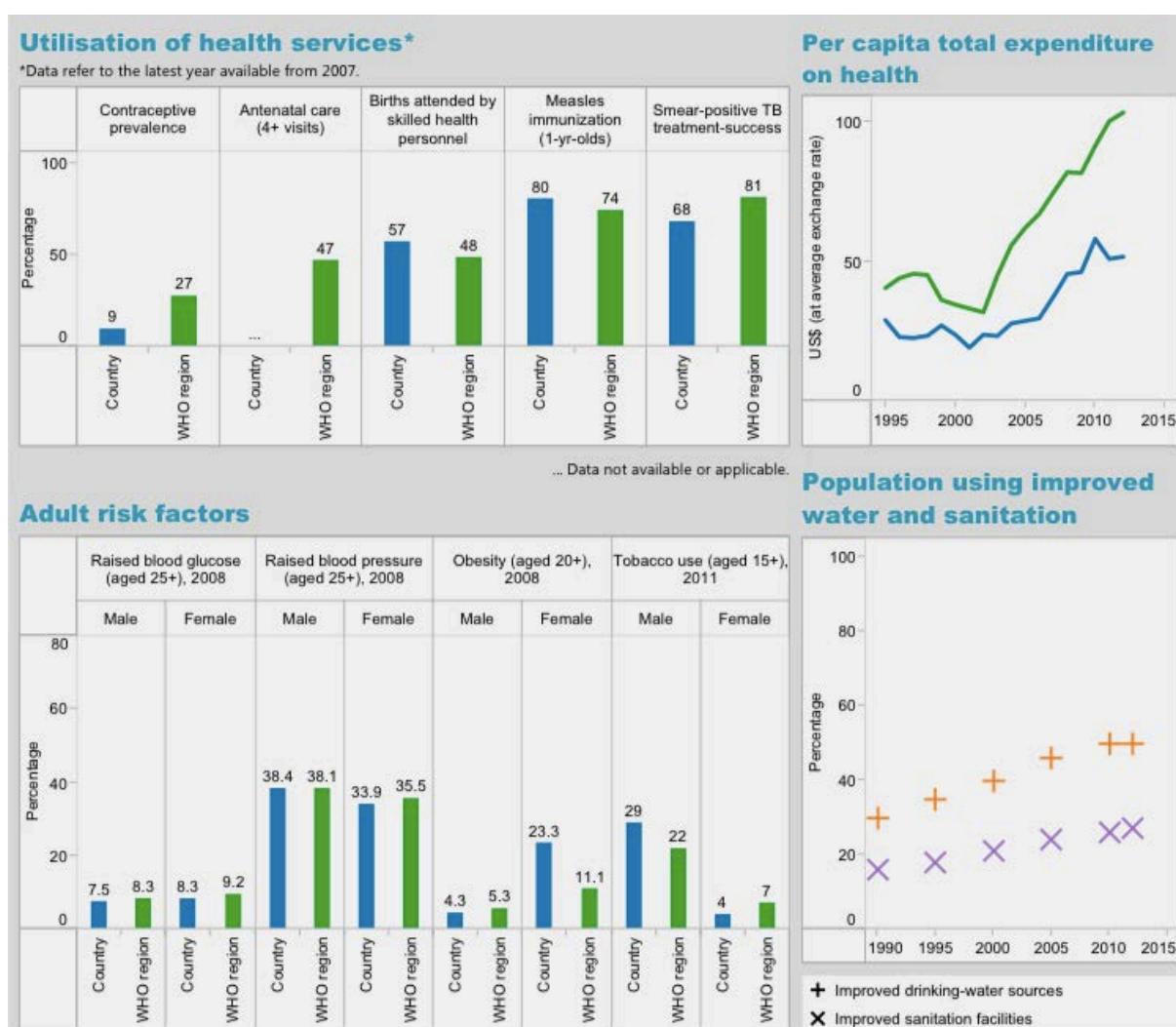
Arabic is the official and national language of Mauritania. However, locally spoken is the Hassaniya, a dialect of Arabic, which contains many Berber words and differs from the Modern Standard Arabic (that is used for official communication). Other national languages are: Pulaar, Soninke, and Wolof. French is also widely used in the media and among educated social strata.

### *Religion*

Mauritania is nearly 100% Muslim, with most of the population adhering to the Sunni denomination. Also the Sufi order, the Tijaniyah and the Qadiriyyah have an impressive influence in the country and other neighbouring states. It is possible to count 4,500 Catholics in Mauritania (mostly foreign residents from West Africa and Europe) that refer to the Roman Catholic Diocese of Nouakchott, founded in 1965. It is important to remark that there are extreme restrictions on freedom of religion in Mauritania; atheism, in fact, is punished by death penalty.

## 1.7 Health

The life expectancy at birth in Mauritania is of 63.4 years, going into details: 61.1 years for males, 65.8 years for females. The country health expenditure is 3.8% of GDP as of 2014. In the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, there were 11 physicians per 100,000 people. The infant mortality rate is of 51.9 deaths/1,000 live births. The major infectious diseases are: bacterial and protozoal diarrhea, hepatitis A, typhoid fever, malaria and dengue fever, and meningococcal meningitis. The obesity rate among Mauritanian women is high.

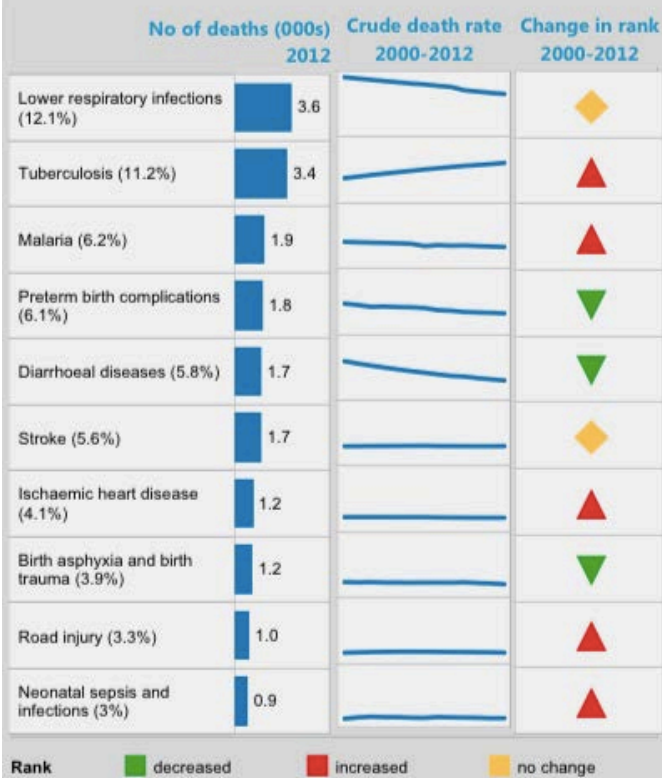


Source: WHO



## Top 10 causes of death

Lower respiratory infections was the leading cause of death, killing 3.6 thousand people in 2012

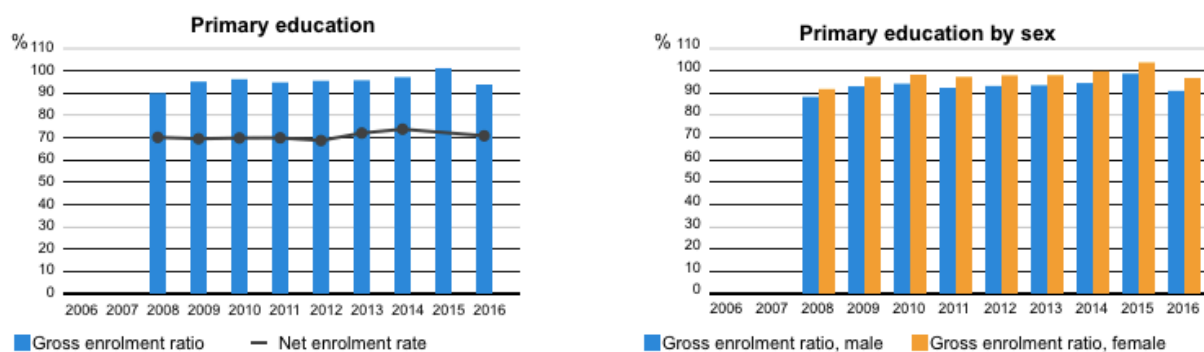
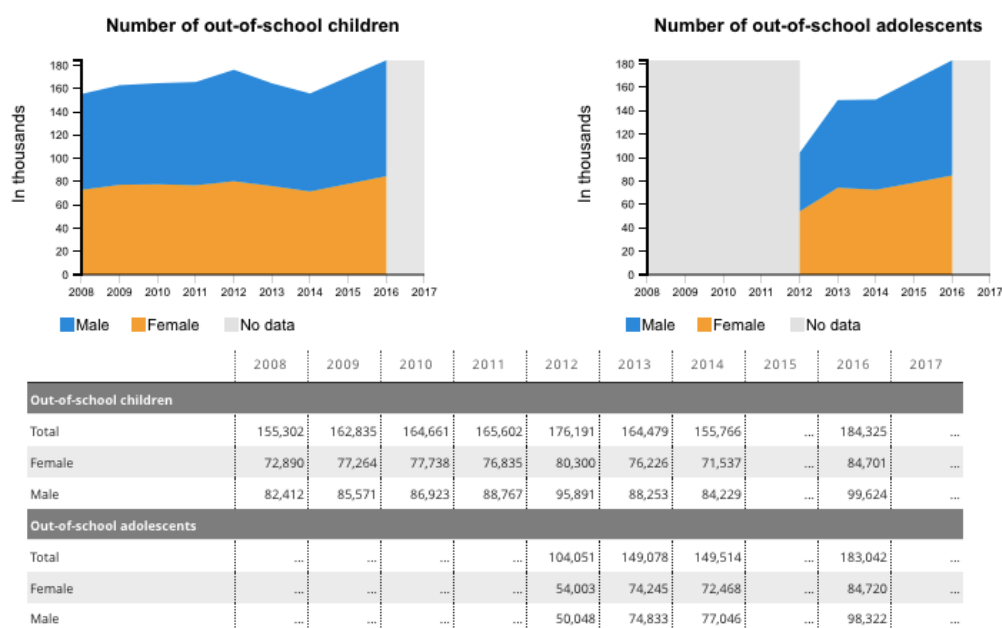


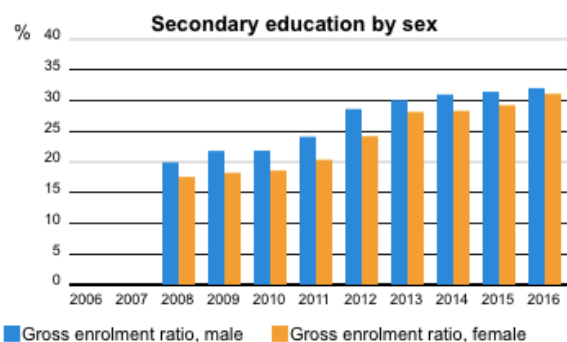
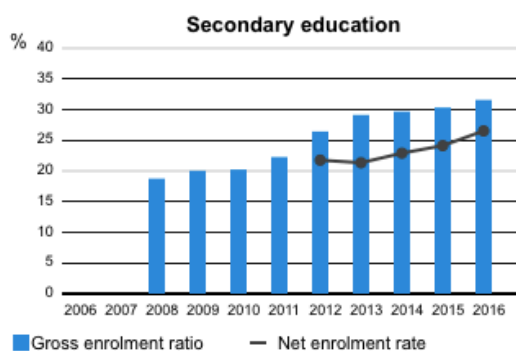
Source: WHO

## 1.8 Education and Literacy

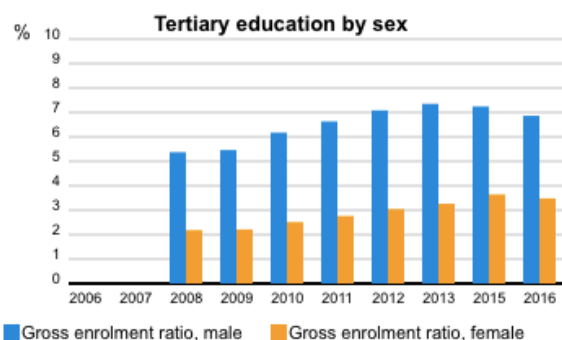
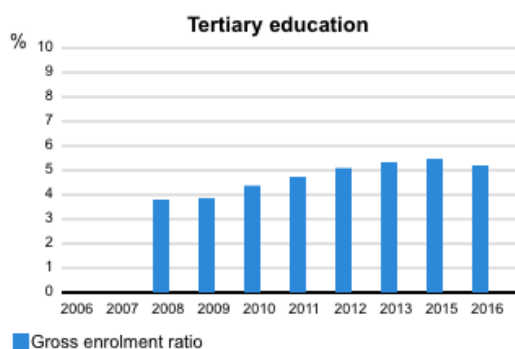
The education expenditure of Mauritania accounts for 2.9% of GDP, as of 2013. The literacy rate among the population is of 52.1% (male 62.6%, female 41.6%). The school life expectancy is of about 9 years: education is compulsory between the ages of 6 and 14. As of 2001, 61% of children who started primary school were likely to reach grade 5. However, a lack of adequate school facilities and teachers, particularly in rural areas, is likely to impede the full realization of the government's goal of universal primary education in Mauritania. Public school is free, but other costs such as books and lunches make education unaffordable for many poor families.

### Participation in Education





| SECONDARY EDUCATION              | 2008  | 2009  | 2010  | 2011  | 2012  | 2013  | 2014  | 2015  | 2016  | 2017 |
|----------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| <b>Gross enrolment ratio (%)</b> |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |      |
| Total                            | 18.75 | 20.04 | 20.23 | 22.26 | 26.43 | 29.13 | 29.68 | 30.34 | 31.57 | ...  |
| Female                           | 17.54 | 18.23 | 18.58 | 20.36 | 24.18 | 28.15 | 28.33 | 29.22 | 31.1  | ...  |
| Male                             | 19.92 | 21.8  | 21.84 | 24.11 | 28.62 | 30.07 | 30.99 | 31.44 | 32.03 | ...  |
| <b>Net enrolment rate (%)</b>    |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |      |
| Total                            | ...   | ...   | ...   | ...   | 21.76 | 21.34 | 22.9  | 24.13 | 26.53 | ...  |
| Female                           | ...   | ...   | ...   | ...   | 20.2  | 19.77 | 21.94 | 23.33 | 27.31 | ...  |
| Male                             | ...   | ...   | ...   | ...   | 23.27 | 22.88 | 23.85 | 24.9  | 25.77 | ...  |

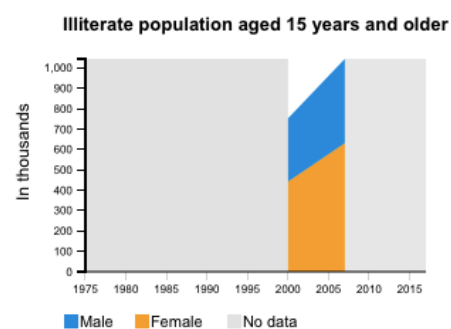
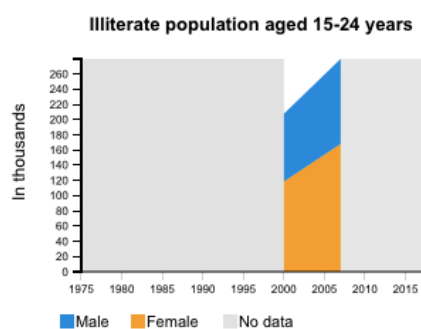


| TERTIARY EDUCATION               | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 |
|----------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| <b>Gross enrolment ratio (%)</b> |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Total                            | 3.8  | 3.86 | 4.37 | 4.73 | 5.09 | 5.33 | ...  | 5.47 | 5.2  | ...  |
| Female                           | 2.18 | 2.21 | 2.51 | 2.76 | 3.04 | 3.26 | ...  | 3.64 | 3.48 | ...  |
| Male                             | 5.37 | 5.46 | 6.17 | 6.63 | 7.08 | 7.35 | ...  | 7.24 | 6.86 | ...  |

## Education Expenditures

|  | 2008    | 2009 | 2010   | 2011    | 2012    | 2013    | 2014 | 2015   | 2016    | 2017 |
|--|---------|------|--------|---------|---------|---------|------|--------|---------|------|
| <b>Government expenditure on education</b>           |         |      |        |         |         |         |      |        |         |      |
| as % of GDP  | 3.55    | ...  | 3.6    | 3.05    | 2.78    | 2.94    | ...  | ...    | 2.63    | ...  |
| as % of total government expenditure                 | 13.88   | ...  | 16.04  | 13.68   | 10.02   | 11.41   | ...  | ...    | 9.33    | ...  |
| <b>Government expenditure per student (in PPP\$)</b> |         |      |        |         |         |         |      |        |         |      |
| Primary education                                    | 354.69  | ...  | 378.31 | 321.76  | 320.11  | 324.82  | ...  | 381.27 | 406.06  | ...  |
| Secondary education                                  | 1037.37 | ...  | 890.21 | 649.13  | 708.85  | 582.76  | ...  | 709.36 | 565.12  | ...  |
| Tertiary education                                   | 5488.71 | ...  | 5466   | 3038.74 | 2566.49 | 2573.85 | ...  | 3685.1 | 3819.23 | ...  |

## Illiterate Population



|                              | TOTAL     | MALE    | FEMALE  |        |
|------------------------------|-----------|---------|---------|--------|
| <b>Illiterate population</b> |           |         |         |        |
| 15-24 years                  | 279,768   | 111,684 | 168,083 | (2007) |
| 15 years and older           | 1,044,668 | 413,627 | 631,041 | (2007) |

Source: UNESCO

## 1.9 Country Economy

After decades of stagnant performance, Mauritania's GDP growth accelerated over the last 15 years. In particular, between 2003 and 2015 the country experienced GDP growth, averaging 5.5%. This represented an impressive achievement if one considers that in the 1990s the annual growth averaged only 2.7%. Booming revenue from the narrow extractives sector had been the main driver of higher economic growth. The value of mineral exports jumped from US\$318 million in 2003 to US\$2,652 million in 2013. Extractives represented, on average, 25% of GDP, 82% of exports, and 23% of domestic revenue. The country, in fact, can count on its extensive deposits of iron ore; moreover gold and copper mining companies are opening mines in the interior.

Despite this positive development, in late 2015 GDP growth receded to 3% on the back of negative terms of trade shock and a drop in mining and oil production.

In sum, despite being rich in natural resources, Mauritania has a low GDP and most of the population still depends on agriculture and livestock, even if most of the nomads and farmers were forced into the cities by recurrent droughts in the 1970s and in the 1980s.

In recent years, drought and economic mismanagement have resulted in a build-up of foreign debt. In March 1999, the government signed an agreement with a joint World Bank – International Monetary Fund mission on a \$54 million enhanced structural adjustment facility (ESAF). The economic objectives have been set for 1999-2002. Moreover, privatization remains one of the key issues.

It is possible to argue that Mauritania faces three different development challenges that need to be tackled in order to make the "extract and export" model effective and able to create economic diversification and job creation. Firstly, the weak management of extractive rents is a binding constraint to inclusive growth in the short and medium term. As a matter of fact, it limits the use of revenue and impedes economic diversification.

Secondly, the failure to harness the full potential of Mauritania's largest non-extractive natural endowments in livestock and fisheries constrains the country's prospects for economic diversification and employment creation. Thirdly, the rapid and outpaced management of urbanization in Mauritania hinders the eventual emergence of productive and inclusive urban centres. The heavy flow of drought-affected rural and nomadic populations into the cities led to the fast-paced expansion of urban centres, which, in turn, created inordinate challenges in planning and the provision of services.

### Economic growth

(% unless otherwise indicated)

|             | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
|-------------|------|------|------|
| US GDP      | 2.3  | 2.6  | 2.5  |
| OECD GDP    | 2.4  | 2.3  | 2.2  |
| World GDP   | 3.0  | 3.0  | 3.0  |
| World trade | 4.6  | 4.1  | 3.8  |

Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit

### GDP - composition by sector

- agriculture: 24.1%
- industry: 34.8%
- services: 41.1%

(2016 estimate)

Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit

### Public debt (General government gross debt as a % of GDP)

| 2013  | 2014  | 2015* | 2016* | 2017* |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 66.2% | 77.1% | 91.2% | 75%   | 81.5% |

\*Estimate

Source: IMF World Economic Outlook 2016

## **2. Political and Security Context**

## 2.1 The Constitution of Mauritania

The first Mauritanian constitution was adopted in 1961 and evidently reflected the influence of the Constitution of the French Fifth Republic in its dedication to liberal democratic principles and inalienable human rights. In 1978 the military regime toppled Daddah and abolished the constitution. Then in December 1980 Haidalla promulgated a new provisional constitution that provided for a multiparty system and the freedom of association. In March 1981, however, following a coup attempt, Haidalla reneged on his intention of returning Mauritania to civilian rule and scrapped the draft constitution. In 1985 the Constitutional Charter of the Military Committee for National Salvation was promulgated and served as the constitution of Mauritania. The charter eliminated any of the pretences of democracy embodied in the 1961 constitution, but it pledged adherence to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to the Charters of the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity and the League of Arab States. The charter also proclaimed Islam the state religion and sharia the only source of law.

The current Constitution of Mauritania was adopted on 12 July 1991 and establishes that Islam is the state religion and the President must be Muslim. The constitution also provides for universal, equal, and secret suffrage in elections for the President and the Parliament, either direct or indirect, and the protection of public and individual

freedoms (such as the right to form political parties, protection from slavery, the right to strike and to property; freedom of movement, expression, assembly, association, commerce and intellectual creation). The President is vested with executive powers, including supreme command of the Armed Forces, the right of appointing civil and military offices and promulgating and executing the law. The President is subject to constraints by the Parliament, which consists of a National Assembly and a Senate, whose members are given immunity to prosecution. The President can call for an extraordinary session of the Parliament. The Mauritanian constitution also provides for the independence of the judiciary, the High Court is the Supreme Court and it protects against arbitrary detention. Mauritania also has a High Islamic Council, an Economic and Social Council, a National Commission of the Rights of Man, which are mandated as consultative councils. In June 2006 a referendum was held that made the first changes to the constitution since it was promulgated. The referendum passed with 97% of votes and limits the president to two five-years terms (previously the presidential terms were six years and there was no limit on re-election) and establishes a maximum age limit of 75 years old for presidential candidates. In August 2017 a new referendum was held that amended the constitution and changed the Parliament structure from bicameral to unicameral by abolishing the Senate.

## 2.2 Elections

The Mauritanian executive branch is composed by the Chief of State (President), the Head of Government (Prime Minister) and a cabinet (Council of Ministers appointed by the President). The President is directly elected by absolute majority popular vote in two rounds for a 5-year term (eligible for a second term); while the Prime Minister is appointed by the President. The legislative branch is made of a unicameral Parliament or *Barlamane* that consists of the National Assembly or *Al Jamiya AL Wataniya*. It is composed of 147 seats: 107 members are directly elected in single and two seat constituencies by absolute majority vote in two rounds if needed, and 40 are directly elected in constituencies with three or more seats by proportional representation vote; members serve a 5-year term.

The first Parliamentary and municipal elections were held in Mauritania on 19 November and 3 December 2006 following a military coup in 2005 that ousted Maaouya Ould Sid'Ahmen Taya. At least 28 political parties competed to comprise the National Assembly. Islamist parties were banned, but many Islamists ran as independent candidates. Before the first round's count was complete, Ahmed Ould Daddah claimed victory for his party, the Rally of Democratic Forces (RFD). After the second round was held, the coalition of former opposition parties had 39 seats (including 15 for the RFD). Messaoud Ould Boulkheir was elected President of the National Assembly.

On 11 March 2007 presidential elections were held following the military coup. Since no candidate received a majority of the votes, a second round was held on 25 March between the two top candidates, Sidi Ould Cheikh Abdallahi and Ahmed Ould Daddah. Abdallahi won with about 53% of the vote and took office in April.

After the coup d'état of 2008, new presidential elections were held. Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, who led the coup won a narrow first-round majority. The opposition initially planned to boycott the election, affirming that the junta was pursuing a unilateral agenda and, as a result, Aziz was widely expected to win. Later, however, the opposition agreed to participate, hence making the election appear more competitive. As a consequence a national unity government was formed under the lead of Aziz.

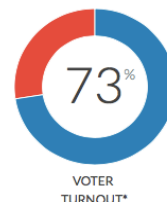
Mauritanian parliamentary elections were held in November 2013. More than 1,000 candidates registered to compete for the leadership of 218 local councils, hence 438 candidates were contesting for the 146 parliamentary seats. The first round of the election's results stated the victory of the ruling Union for the Republic (UPR), which won 56 seats. In the runoff of December the UPR won the majority with 75 seats in the Assembly.

The latest Mauritanian presidential elections were held on 21 June 2014, with a second round planned for 5 July if no candidate received more than 50% of the vote. The result, instead, was a first round victory for the incumbent President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz of the Union for the Republic, who received 82% of the vote. However, most of the opposition boycotted the election.

### November 2013 Parliamentary Elections

#### RESULTS

Cast Votes: 243,998  
Valid Votes: 226,204  
Invalid Votes: 17,794  
Registered Voters: 311,940



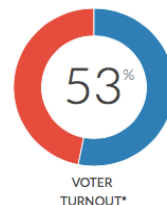
#### PARTIES:

| PARTY                                     | SEATS WON | SEATS CHANGE | VOTES   |
|---|-----------|--------------|---------|
| Union for the Republic                    | 22        | -            | 124,656 |
|   | 55.11%    |              |         |
| National Rally for Reform and Development | 4         | -            | 31,103  |
|   | 13.75%    |              |         |
| El Wiam                                   | 2         | -            | 11,369  |
|   | 5.09%     |              |         |
| Popular Progressive Alliance              | -         | -            | 9,987   |
|   | 4.42%     |              |         |
| Union for Democracy and Progress          | -         | -            | 8,458   |
|   | 3.74%     |              |         |

### June 2014 Presidential Elections

#### RESULTS

Cast Votes: 749,865  
Valid Votes: 705,788  
Invalid Votes: 44,077  
Registered Voters: 1,328,168



#### CANDIDATES:

|                                  |         |
|----------------------------------|---------|
| Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz          | 577,995 |
|                                  | 81.89   |
| Biram Dah Abeid                  | 61,218  |
|                                  | 8.67    |
| Boïdiel Ould Houmeit             | 31,773  |
|                                  | 4.50    |
| Ibrahima Mactar Sarr             | 31,368  |
|                                  | 4.44    |
| Laila Maryam Mint Moulaye Idriss | 3,434   |
|                                  | 0       |

Source: Election guide



## 2.3 Political Parties



### *Union for the Republic (Union pour la république, UPR)*

The UPR was formed in 2009 by Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz after he resigned from the military to run for President of Mauritania. Aziz resigned as chairman of the party on 2 August 2009 after winning the presidential election, as the President of Mauritania cannot be a member of any party. The UPR currently has a majority in the National Assembly. The actual President of the party is Mohamed Mahmoud Ould Mohamed Lemine. The ideology of the UPR is centrism and populism.



### *People's Progressive Alliance (Alliance populaire progressiste, APP)*

The President of the APP is Messoud Ould Boulkheir. After Taya's ouster in 2005, Boulkheir stood as the APP candidate in the March 2007 presidential elections. In this election he placed fourth, receiving 9.79% of the vote; he subsequently backed Abdallahi for the second round, who won the election. In April 2007, Boulkheir was elected as President of the National Assembly. Following the August 2008 military coup, the APP, along with the pro-Abdallahi National Pact for Democracy and Development, joined the four-party National Front for the Defence of Democracy, which opposed the coup. The political position of the party is centre-left and its ideology is of nasserism and social democracy.



### *National Rally for Reform and Development (RNRD)*

Also known by its Arabic name Tewassoul, RNRD is an Islamist political party, internationally affiliated to the Muslim Brotherhood. It was founded in 2007 and its President is Mohamed Jemil Ould Mansour. Tewassoul is a member of the opposition Coordination of the Democratic Opposition.



### *Union for Democracy and Progress (Union pour la Démocratie et le Progrès, UDP)*

It was founded on June 11, 1993 by Hamdi Ould Mouknass, who previously served as Minister of Foreign Affairs under President Moktar Ould Daddah. The UDP is led by Naha Mint Mouknass.



### *El Wiam (Parti de l'Entente Démocratique et Sociale)*

The party is led by Boidiel Ould Houmeit. El Wiam was one of the many opposition groups, which took part in the 2011 Mauritanian protests, protesting against the authoritarian rule of Aziz. The party won ten seats in the 2013 parliamentary elections, emerging as the third largest party in the National Assembly. It nominated Boïdiel Ould Houmeit as its candidate for the 2014 presidential elections. Ould Houmeit finished third out of five candidates with 4.5% of the vote.



### *Alliance for Justice and Democracy/Movement for Renewal (Alliance pour la Justice et la Démocratie/Mouvement pour la Renovation, AJD/MR)*

The AJD/MR represents the black minority population of the south of the country, centred on the Senegal River, and was formed and is led by rights activist and former presidential candidate Ibrahima Moctar Sarr. The party was founded in August 2007 by a merger of Ibrahima Moctar Sarr's Movement for National

Reconciliation and the Alliance for Justice and Democracy party. The party's colours are black and white, and its symbol is a Zebu bull, livestock being associated with the traditionally pastoralist Fula people who make up much of its constituency.



*Democratic Republican Party for Renewal (Parti Républicain Démocratique pour le Renouveau, PRDP)*

Founded in 1992 and formerly known as the Democratic and Social Republican Party (PRDS), the grouping has changed its identity and adjusted its political stance following the 2005 coup. Formerly supportive of President Taya and his pro-Israeli stance, the party has since denounced Taya's policies and the mid-2006 Israeli military campaign in Lebanon. The President of the party is Sidi Mohamed Ould Mohamed Vall. The PRDP is a right-wing party and its ideology is of liberal conservatism and pro-western.



*Union of the Forces of Progress (Union des Forces du Progrès, UFP)*

The UFP is a left leaning party that describes itself as cross ethnic, Republican, and social justice oriented. It has made strong statements against the persecution of black Mauritians, the continuation of slavery and unfair labour practices, and for guarantees of safety and resources for those refugees from the 1989 inter-ethnic conflict who remain in Senegal. The UFP has also strongly condemned the involvement of the Mauritanian Army in politics, specifically the 2005 and 2008 coups. The President of the UFP is Mohamed Ould Maouloud.

## 2.4 Key Political Leaders



*Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz*

Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz is the current President of Mauritania since 2009. He was a leading figure in the August 2005 coup that deposed President Taya and in August 2008 he led another coup, which toppled President Abdallahi. Following the 2008 coup, Abdel Aziz became President of the High Council of State during the political transition leading to a new election. He resigned from the post in April 2009 in order to stand as a candidate in the July 2009 presidential elections, which he won. Aziz was born in Akjouit on 20 December 1956. He joined the Royal Military Academy of Meknes, Morocco in 1977 and, after a string of promotions, established the elite BASEP (Presidential Security Battalion). Abdel Aziz also served as the Chairman of the African Union from 2014 to 2015.



*Yahya Ould Hademine*

Yahya Ould Hademine is the Mauritanian Prime Minister since 2014. He was born on December 31, 1953 in Timbédra and obtained a degree in Metallurgical Engineering from the Ecole Polytechnique de Montréal in 1979. After moving back to Mauritania, he began working in the mining sector. After the 2008 coup, Hademine sided with the coup leaders and was allowed to keep his job. In December 2010, he became Minister of Equipment and Transport. After President Aziz was re-elected in June 2014, he appointed Hademine to the premiership on August. Hademine replaced Moulaye Ould Mohamed Laghdaf, who had been Prime Minister since 2008. Pledging to promote the participation of women in political, economic and social development, Hademine appointed seven women to his government when it was formed three days after his appointment as Prime Minister.



*Mohamed Mahmoud Ould Mohamed Lemine*

He currently is the Chairman of the Union for Republic party. He was born in 1952 at Hodh El Gharbi, studied economics and worked as a professor at the University of Nouakchott. He served as Minister of Defence under Prime Ministers Zeine Ould Zeidane and Yahya Ould Ahmed El Waghed until the August 2008 coup.



*Mohamed Jemil Ould Mansour*

He is the President of the National Rally for Reform and Development. Born in Nouakchott in 1967, he first became involved in politics through student unions in the 1980s. In the early 1990s he helped founding the Islamic Front, which, however, was not allowed by the Taya government to become a political party. Mansour was then arrested in 1994 as part of a campaign of mass arrests by the Mauritanian government. He was elected Mayor of Arafat in 2001, and then arrested again in 2003 alongside dozens of other Mauritanian Islamists accused of plotting to overthrow the government. He was detained for several months and then released before the 2003 presidential election, for which he supported Haidalla. He was granted asylum from Belgium in 2003 due to the increasing clamp down by the Mauritanian government on Islamist groups. He returned to Mauritania in mid-2004 and was again arrested and released several days later. He helped founding the Democratic Forum Party, in which he

served as Vice-President. The party, however, was denied legal status due to its Islamist links. He was elected to the parliament in the 2006 elections, while during the 2009 presidential elections he was put forward as Tewassoul's candidate and came fourth with 4.76% of the vote.



*Messoud Ould Boulkheir*

He is among the first Haratine to become a political leader in Mauritania. Currently, Boulkheir is the President of the People's Progressive Alliance, and he has been President of the National Assembly of Mauritania since April 2007. Born around 1943 from a family of slaves, he started his political career in 1962 when he began fighting against emancipation of Haratine. In 1978 he created a secret organization for the emancipation of Haratine (EL HOR), which strongly supported the community. The government started arresting and torturing the leaders of the EL HOR party. Hence in 1990 Messaoud created the FUDC (United democratic forces for change). He participated in the creation of UFD (United democratic forces) in 1992, which regrouped all political leaders (Beydhan, Haratine, and negro-Africans). In 1995, he created his own party called AC (action for changes), which regrouped Haratine into a majority, but it was soon dissolved by the government. Hence Messaoud created the People's Progressive Alliance, his current political party. Boulkheir was a candidate in the presidential election of November 7, 2003 taking 4<sup>th</sup> place with about 5% of the vote. He also participated to the March 2007 presidential election, in which he placed 4<sup>th</sup> again receiving 9.79% of the vote. Following the August 2008 coup, Boulkheir still recognized Abdallahi as President and rejected the junta's plans to hold a new election. His party took part in a four-party alliance opposing the coup. In April 2009 he protested against the planned presidential elections denouncing a unilateral agenda.



*Naha Mint Mouknass*

She was born in 1969 in Nouakchott and her father served as Minister for foreign affairs under Moktar Ould Daddah. In 2000 she became the President of the Union for Democracy and Progress and then advisor to President Taya, serving in 2000-2001. She was later appointed Minister Advisor to the Presidency from 2001 to 2005 (until the military ouster of Taya). In 2009 she was appointed as Foreign Minister, the first woman in Mauritania to cover such an important role.



*Sidi Ould Cheikh Abdallahi*

He was the President of Mauritania from 2007 to 2008. In 1971, he was appointed as Minister of Planning and Industrial Development by President Daddah. During the 1970s he served in a series of positions in the government, including that of Minister of State for the National Economy in 1975 and Minister of Planning and Mines in 1976. As Minister of Planning and Mines he was involved in the nationalization of the iron mines and the introduction of the ouguiya as the nation's currency. Following the coup d'état that ousted President Daddah in July 1978, Abdallahi was imprisoned until April 1979. From 1982 to late 1985 Abdallahi lived in Kuwait, where he worked as an adviser to the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development. When he returned to Mauritania in 1986, he served in the government under President Taya as Minister of Hydraulics and Energy and then as Minister of Fishing and the Maritime Economy in 1987. After a clash with influential businessmen over fishing policies, he moved to Niger from 1989 to 2003 and worked for the Kuwait Fund as an adviser. During the 2007 presidential election he ran as an independent and took 1<sup>st</sup> place with 24.8% of the vote. He was then deposed in a military coup on August 6, 2008.



## 2.5 Media Landscape and Civil Society

### *Media Landscape*

Mauritania appears to have one of the most open media environments of the Maghreb region. The country, in fact, is first among all other Arab states in the 2014 Press Freedom Index issued by Paris-based Reporters Without Borders. Nonetheless, despite constitutional guarantees of press freedom, journalists practice self-censorship, and private newspapers face closure for publishing material considered offensive to Islam or threatening to the state. In 2011, the government ended a 51-year monopoly on broadcast media with a call for applications for licenses from private outlets. Defamation was decriminalized in 2011, though fines can still be levied. To cite an example, in December 2014, Mohamed Cheikh Ould Mohamed M'Kheir, a 28-year-old independent blogger, was sentenced to death for apostasy in an expedited judicial process. Ould M'Kheir published an article online in which he criticized the unequal social order in Mauritania and the prophet Mohammed.

State institutions hold shares in Television de Mauritanie (TVM) and Radio Mauritanie. Moreover, there is easy access to pan-Arab and European satellite TV. The BBC is available on FM in the capital (106.9) and in the second city, Nouadhibou (102.4). International radios from Germany, China, and France are also relayed on FM. There are at least 30 daily or weekly publications. Newspapers suffer from limited advertising, a poor distribution network and the growth of online media. Internet access, in fact, is unrestricted. There were more than 455,000 users by 2014 (around 11% of the population). While Facebook's penetration rate stands at 5.3%.

Main press outlets: Al-Sha'b (state-run daily, in Arabic), Akhbar Nouakchott (private, run daily, in Arabic) Horizons (state-run daily, in French), L'Authentique (private, run daily, in French), Essirage (private, run daily, in Arabic).

Television channels: Television de Mauritanie (state-run, programmes in Arabic and French), Sahel TV (private), Chinguett TV (private), Al-Mourabitoun TV (private, pro-Islamist).

Radio channels: Radio Mauritanie (state-run, programmes in Arabic and French), Mauritanid FM (private), Sahara Media FM (private).

News agencies: Mauritanian News Agency (state-run), Cridem (private), Agence Nouakchott d'Information (private), Taqadoumy (private), Sahara Media (private), Noor Info (private).

### *Civil Society*

The constitution guarantees freedom of assembly, however organizers of large gatherings must get the approval of the authorities, which is often denied. Furthermore, gatherings perceived as opposed to the government are sometimes subject to surveillance. In 2014 civil society groups and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) were facing intimidation: human rights organizations and their members were increasingly targeted and

persecuted. To cite an example, in January 2014 a peaceful gathering organized by a coalition of human rights organizations to

commemorate the deaths of Afro-Mauritanians between 1989 and 1992 was hit by police using tear gas. Moreover, in November of the same year former presidential candidate Abeid was arrested together with nine fellow human rights defenders, during a peaceful march against slavery in the Senegal River Valley.

Workers have the right to unionize under the approval of the public prosecutor. However, they often face hostility from employers. Even if only about a quarter of Mauritanians are formally employed, according to the data, 90% of workers in the industrial and commercial sectors are unionized. Despite this relatively positive remark, workers are often wrongfully terminated and organized workers are sometimes pressured to withdraw their union membership. The right to strike is limited by notice requirements and bans on certain forms of strike action.

There have been and there keep on being many programmes launched by various international organizations with the aim of enhancing the relationship between the Mauritanian society and government. The National Democratic Institute (NDI), for instance, has since 2003 supported the country's political parties, parliament and civil society through consultations and skills-building workshops. The focus of these activities mostly is on women, youth and marginalized communities. Since 2013 until 2015 the NDI locally conducted civic and voter education and a programme for teaching democratic values and critical thinking skills ahead of the elections.

It is also important to remark that in 2008 many Mauritanian NGOs received funds from the World Bank's Civil Society Fund.

The capital received were used for organizing a number of workshops and events particularly focusing on citizen oversight of public actions.

## 2.6 Security Sector

The level of insecurity in Mauritania is increasing due to the emergence of home-grown violent extremism, insurgent ethnic groups and cross-border criminal and terrorist activity. The Mauritanian society is stratified in nature; since it was established, in fact, the country has been divided along ethno-racial lines. This has led to the rise of protracted tensions and identity-based conflicts. In particular, confrontations between Arab and black Africans have their roots in the 1960s. In the 1980s tensions continued when the regime introduced reforms to deal with the problem of desertification, moving Arab herders closer to the Senegal River and the black African farmers living there. As a consequence conflict erupted in 1989 with the start of the Mauritania-Senegal border war, which degenerated into ethnicity-based repatriations and expulsions. Between 40,000 and 60,000 black Africans were expelled to Senegal and other 15,000-20,000 to Mali. Moreover, the unstable economic situation of both the white and black Moors has created tensions, which in turn reflect the discrimination of the government towards certain ethnicities. Identity conflicts translated into violence in March 2010 between black Africans and Arabic-speaking students after a statement made by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Culture in which they referred to Arabic as a dominant language. Moreover, in late 2011, riots broke out in protest against a controversial civil census that Black Africans, especially in the south, believed to be discriminatory. Despite the steps taken by the government to prevent conflict and enhance ethnic reconciliation, the situation in Mauritania remains unstable.

Further complicating the security scenario of the country is the presence of violent extremism. In 2005 Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb attacked the Lemgheity barracks in the north-east of the country killing 15 Mauritanian soldiers and wounding other 39. The event made the Mauritanians realize that the country is a target of extremist armed groups and that disaffected youth might join

the terrorist organization. This fear became a reality when in 2008 investigations and arrests in Nouakchott clearly showed the link between Mauritanian youths and Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb. Even if the number of youths recruited remains minimum and the attacks carried by the group lack of sophistication, the danger should not be underestimated. The government has imprisoned many suspected of violent extremism, thus temporarily disrupting the growth of a nascent militant movement in the country. Nonetheless, the penetration of imported Salafi ideas into Mauritanian society has impacted the country's culture of tolerance and particularistic Islamic identity. Indeed, some of the Salafi ideas have contributed to the radicalization of the religious discourse, sustaining the wave of extremism in Mauritania. Apparently some Saudi-influenced mahadras (especially in the Trarza region) are particularly liable to produce fundamentalists and militant recruits. The link between the level of education and radicalization seems notably evident in the case of Mauritania: the Mauritanians who have been arrested for terrorism offenses are young (between 16 and 24 years old), poor, only speak Arabic and have little education. Moreover, the risk of radicalization is higher in Mauritania as it gets combined with other factors such as the fragmentation of social structures and the widespread feeling of unfairness. So far, most of the recruits into the extremist networks have been white Moors, but there is growing concern that other racial groups, especially the Haratin, might be vulnerable to radicalization as well. To conclude, Mauritania has to deal with an extremely complex security scenario that combines ethnic tensions with the rise of extremism. Further complicating the picture is the weakness of the government and the fact that local police lacks the resources to respond effectively to serious crimes (such as mugging, armed robbery, rape and assault).

### **3. Law enforcement structures and actors**

## 3.1 The Police

The Mauritanian security force operates under the Ministry of the Interior and Decentralization; while the Director General of the General Directorate of National Security heads the National Police. The National Police of Mauritania is charged with protecting the fundamental interests of the State. It is responsible throughout the entire national territory for:

- public security
- judicial police
- internal and external security of the State
- the fight against terrorism
- research and the centralization of the information within its jurisdiction
- the maintenance and restoration of public order
- the protection of people and their property
- surveillance of the territory
- immigration
- the fight against economic and financial crime.

Furthermore, the National Police of Mauritania ensures the execution and the respect of the laws and regulations. It is a civilian force responsible for national law enforcement, including security within refugee camps. The police have its bases in all urban centres.



## 3.2 Other security forces

### *National Guard of Mauritania*

The National Guard of Mauritania has its headquarters in Nouakchott; it is a small, lightly equipped paramilitary law enforcement unit and it closely cooperates with the National Locust Control Centre. The main task of the guard is to patrol remote desert areas, generally by camel. It is deployed to secure land borders and for internal security. It has bases throughout the country. Based on the French model, the National Guard is responsible for working with the other police forces and security agencies and maintaining and restoring public order. The National Guard of Mauritania directly reports to the Minister of Interior. It has about 2,000 uniformed personnel, plus 1,000 auxiliaries, who can be deployed in case of national emergency. Its personnel is trained by both the Army and the Gendarmerie Nationale, the first teaches battlefield skills, while the latter takes care of instructing the other skills and know-how. It seems that the National Guard is deployed beyond its current manpower capability and is insufficiently equipped.

### *Gendarmerie Nationale of Mauritania*

The Gendarmerie Nationale is a military police force with wide ranging powers. It is organized into six regional companies and directly reports to the Minister of Interior. It is Mauritania's main paramilitary police force and it is responsible for law enforcement in urban and rural areas. In 1994 it comprised about 3,000 men. When it was formed after the independence of the country in 1960, the gendarmerie was considered part of the Armed Forces. However, it was later separated from the Army and given its own commander and headquarters. It is

responsible to the Minister of Interior and is mainly equipped with small arms and lightly armoured vehicles.

### *Presidential Security Battalion*

The "Bataillon de la sécurité présidentielle" is composed of several hundred men and is operationally responsible to the Minister of the Interior. It is charged with the protection of Mauritania's President, his family, and his offices and residence. In the late 1980s, the regime considered the use of Iraqi troops as staff for the unit. However, in the end it was decided that Iraq would only train and equip the Presidential Security Battalion.

### *Customs Corps*

The Customs Corps of Mauritania is responsible for customs supervision at land, sea and air entry points.

### *Nomad Security Guard*

It is a small, paramilitary force of about 100 men. It operates under the jurisdiction of the regular Mauritanian Armed Forces. It is tasked with policing the country's vast and often unmarked desert borders. While performing its duties, the Nomad Security Guard uses camels and motor vehicles, given the extremely remote and forbidding terrain of the operational areas.

### 3.3 The judiciary

In the timeframe 1960s-1970s, the legal system of Mauritania evidently replicated some of the aspects of the French legal and judicial system. Nonetheless, Islamic courts coexisted together with secular courts, based on the French model. Neither appellate courts nor courts with constitutional jurisdiction existed. Furthermore there were few secular lawyers. The 1961 constitution provided that French laws were to remain in effect until amended. Only in the early 1970s new labour and nationality codes were adopted, along with new codes of penal, civil, commercial, and administrative procedure. The sharia Islamic code, which was instituted in 1980, served as the law of the land in civil matters and also covered areas of public law as theft and murder. At the top of the judicial system in 1987 was the Supreme Court, which had six permanent members, including a president, who had to be a jurist in both Islamic and secular law.

The 1991 constitution completely revised the judicial system, which now includes lower, middle and upper level courts, each with specialized jurisdiction. Furthermore, 43 department-level tribunals now bridge the traditional and modern court systems, which are staffed by traditional magistrates trained in Koranic law. Ten regional courts of first instance handle general civil cases, while three regional courts of appeal hear challenges to decisions at the department level. A supreme court, headed by a

magistrate named by the president to a five-year term, reviews appeals taken from decisions of the regional courts of appeal.

The 1991 constitution also establishes a six-member constitutional court, three members of which are named by the president, two by the national assembly president, and one by the senate president. While the judiciary is nominally independent, it is subject to pressure and influence by the executive, which controls the appointment and dismissal of judges. The system is strongly influenced by rulings and settlements of tribal elders based on Shari'ah and tribal regulations. The Codes of Civil and Criminal Procedure were revised in 1993 to bring them into line with the guarantees of the 1991 constitution, which provides for due process of law.

Therefore, the Mauritanian judicial system combines the French and Islamic traditions. The constitution guarantees the independence of the judiciary and an organic law also protects judges from undue influence. However, the independence of the judiciary is weakened in practice by other rules that endorse the formal domination of the executive over the judiciary.

## **4. Migrations and Human Rights Issues**

## 4.1 Internal and International Migration

### *Inward migration*

According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring centre (IDMC) there are 36,000 refugees in Mauritania, as of 2016. The Islamic Republic of Mauritania, due to its geographical position, has become an important transit site for migratory movements. As the International Organization for Migration affirms, Mauritania is a vast, largely uninhabited country, hard to fully control: with only 47 border posts to cover more than 5,000 km of land borders and 800 kilometres of coastline, border control and security management is a significant challenge. Given its geographic location south of the Sahara and the porosity of its borders, Mauritania is subject to increasing migration inflows, transit flows as well as trans-border threats (such as cattle thefts, irregular migration, terrorism and trafficking of arms, people and drugs). Furthermore, authorities often lack the necessary means and resources to effectively implement border controls and security.

Inward flows have ancient roots in Mauritania: coming mainly from neighboring countries, labor migrants were motivated by the need to fill gaps in the labor market and to address construction and infrastructures challenges. The 1990s, instead, had been characterized by large inward flows of refugees and asylum seekers due to civil conflicts in African countries (such as Liberia, Sierra Leone and the Ivory Coast). Later, during the 2000s, Mauritania has also evolved into an important transit country, attracting irregular migrants attempting to cross to Europe through the Canary Islands.

**Born-abroad population residing in Mauritania by country of birth, 2000, 2010**

| Country of birth                          | 2000          |              | 2010          |
|---|---------------|--------------|---------------|
|   | Number        | %            | Number        |
| Mali                                      | 16,712        | 38.4         | n.a.          |
| Senegal                                   | 14,681        | 33.7         | n.a.          |
| Guinea Conakry                            | 1,651         | 3.8          | n.a.          |
| Ivory Coast                               | 1,462         | 3.4          | n.a.          |
| Maghreb countries                         | 1,721         | 4.0          | n.a.          |
| Other countries                           | 7,292         | 16.8         | n.a.          |
| <b>Total</b>                              | <b>43,519</b> | <b>100.0</b> | <b>99,229</b> |
| <i>% of the total resident population</i> | <i>1.7</i>    |              | <i>3.0</i>    |

Source: Mauritanian Census (2000), United Nations Population Division, UNDP (2010)

### *Outward migration*

Outward flows began in the 1970s due to correlated factors: severe and frequent droughts caused the degradation of the agricultural and pastoral system, plus the population was experiencing high levels of poverty and unemployment. The first flows were directed towards African countries (such as Mali, Senegal, Gambia and the Ivory Coast); while during the late 1980s and beginning of the 1990s, given the 1989 Mauritania-Senegal conflict, flows shifted to oil-producing Gulf countries, Libya and European countries; which offered job opportunities. There, Mauriticians were granted the status of refugees. According to the Mauritanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, 250,000 Mauritanian resided abroad in 2004, counting 8.1% of the Mauritanian population.

**Mauritanian emigrants by region of residence, 2004**

| Region of residence             | Number         | %            |
|---------------------------------|----------------|--------------|
| <b>West Africa</b>              | <b>128 000</b> | <b>51,2</b>  |
| <i>of which the Ivory Coast</i> | <i>50 000</i>  | <i>20,0</i>  |
| <i>Mali</i>                     | <i>40 000</i>  | <i>16,0</i>  |
| <i>Gambia</i>                   | <i>20 000</i>  | <i>8,0</i>   |
| <i>Senegal</i>                  | <i>10 000</i>  | <i>4,0</i>   |
| <b>Other African countries</b>  | <b>17 500</b>  | <b>7,0</b>   |
| <b>Gulf countries</b>           | <b>24 000</b>  | <b>9,6</b>   |
| <i>of which Saudi Arabia</i>    | <i>20 000</i>  | <i>8,0</i>   |
| <i>United Arab Emirates</i>     | <i>4 000</i>   | <i>1,6</i>   |
| <b>Other countries</b>          | <b>80 500</b>  | <b>32,2</b>  |
| <i>of which France</i>          | <i>20 000</i>  | <i>8,0</i>   |
| <i>Canary Islands</i>           | <i>2 000</i>   | <i>0,8</i>   |
| <b>Total</b>                    | <b>250 000</b> | <b>100,0</b> |

Source: Mauritanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation

## 4.2 Human Rights Situation

The human rights situation in Mauritania is extremely weak. The country has many human rights problems such as the use of torture by law enforcement officers, arbitrary arrests, dangerous prison conditions, continuing slavery practices, violations of freedom of press and association, government influence over the judiciary, public corruption and restrictions on religious freedom. In the country it is very difficult to obtain a national ID document, this stands as an obstacle to accessing basic social services. Furthermore, in Mauritania it is still practiced child marriage, female genital mutilation and other forms of gender-based violence. Recently, in April 2018, the National Assembly passed a law that imposes the death penalty for anyone convicted of blasphemous speech and acts deemed "sacrilegious".

### *Universal and regional human rights instruments ratified*

As a United Nations Member State, and being Mauritania part of specific universal human rights treaties, the country is subject to the oversight of various UN human rights bodies, including the Human Rights Council.

Mauritania has ratified the following UN human rights treaties:

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)
- International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance (CED)
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD)
- International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (CMW)

Mauritania has also ratified the following regional human rights treaties:

- African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights
- African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
- AU Convention Governing Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa
- Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Establishment of the
- African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights
- Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa

- AU Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa

### *Freedom of expression, association and assembly*

According to Amnesty International, security forces continue to intimidate and attack bloggers, human rights defenders and whoever criticises the government. Moreover, anti-slavery activists are arrested. Security forces also use tear gas and baton to repress peaceful protests across the country. Furthermore, international human rights activists and NGOs were refused to access to Mauritania in 2017, and the issue persists.

### *Torture and other ill-treatment*

The constitution of Mauritania prohibit this practices, nonetheless, human rights observers state that security personnel uses torture against detainees to get confessions. Detainees, in fact, reported that they were tortured during pre-trial detention in order to extract confessions and to intimidate them. Torture methods in 2011 and previous years reportedly included kicking, beating, electric shocks, cigarette burns, pulling out of hair, sexual violence, suspension by the arms, shackling in painful positions, and deprivation of sleep and food. People held in police stations (including the Commissariat in Nouakchott) were routinely placed in prolonged solitary confinement. Furthermore, people suspected of terrorism are detained for up to 45 days without access to legal representation. Finally, detention conditions are poor: overcrowded, poor sanitation and inadequate nutrition. Many prisoners are unable to leave their extremely crowded cells or breathe fresh air for months or years at a time. Sanitation conditions are poor due to the lack of hygienic products such as soap and detergent and prison management's inability to dispose of waste properly. Malnutrition is a more serious problem, affecting vulnerable members of the prison population, particularly foreign inmates, prisoners without familial support, and individuals suffering from untreated diseases. The government did not respond robustly to allegations of inhumane conditions, although some progress was made in improving the quality of health care.

### *Economic, social and cultural rights*

The government had made progresses in alleviating poverty in recent years, nonetheless a large proportion of the population continues to live in poverty without adequate access to food, education, water, sanitation and health care. In the rural areas of the country there is no prenatal and postnatal care. Moreover, the Haratines and Afro-Mauritanians are excluded from many areas of economic and social life. In addition, the fact that the government had not collected statistics on the numbers of Haratine and Afro-Mauritanian people in the country, made their needs and rights invisible.

### *Refugees' and migrants' rights*

The country has practiced the collective expulsion of irregular migrants and refugees, who are then often abandoned on the southern border with Senegal. Moreover, in a site in Nouakchott

where irregular migrants are held, there are about 20-30 detainees with no toilet facilities and insufficient room to lie or sit down. Economic and Financial Crimes, a special chamber responsible for economic crimes, to reinforce the legal efforts against corruption.

#### *Slavery and trafficking of people*

Although the government has criminalized slavery, human rights and anti-slavery groups denounce its persistence. Moreover, there are a lot of former slaves and their descendants in the country who live in extreme poverty and are marginalized. Mauritania is a source, transit, and destination country for women, men and children subjected to condition of forced labour and sex trafficking. Furthermore, adults and children from traditional slave castes are subjected to slavery-related practices rooted in ancestral master-slave relationship. According to the estimate of a Mauritanian NGO, slavery may affect up to 20% of the population in both rural and urban settings. Persons subjected to slavery are forced to work without pay as cattle herders and domestic servants. Mauritanian girls as well as girls from Mali, Senegal, Gambia, and other West African countries are forced into domestic servitude. Mauritanian women and girls are forced into prostitution in the country or transported to countries in the Middle East for the same purpose. Men from Middle Eastern countries use legally contracted "temporary marriages" as a means to sexually exploit young girls and women in Mauritania. The government does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking, but it is making efforts to do so. For the first time in its history, in November 2011, the government successfully prosecuted and punished a slave-master under its 2007 anti-slavery law. In early 2011, the Parliament approved a constitutional provision criminalizing slavery and all forms of exploitation, equating them to crimes against humanity. In August, the government also enacted a new statute to strengthen the Labor Code governing the employment of domestic workers in private households. Despite these efforts, investigations and prosecutions in 2011 remained minimal and protective services for victims were inadequate. As a consequence to such ongoing situation, the United States in November 2018 affirmed it would end trade benefits for Mauritania for not doing enough to end forced labor.

#### *Corruption*

The law provides criminal penalties for official corruption, but authorities in 2011 did not enforce the law effectively, and officials often engaged in corrupt practices with impunity. Corrupt practices were widely believed to exist at all levels of government, and the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators reflected that corruption was a severe problem. Mauritania ranked 143 out of 183 countries in the 2011 Corruption Perceptions Index reported by Transparency International. There were reports in 2011 that government officials frequently used their power to obtain favours such as unauthorized exemption from taxes, special grants of land, and preferential treatment during bidding on government projects. Corruption was the most pervasive in government procurement, bank loans, fishing-license distribution, land distribution, and tax payments. The Ministry of the Interior's Economic Crimes Brigade and the Office of the Inspector General were responsible in 2011 for investigating corruption. On 16 January, the Judiciary Council created the Criminal Division for

During the year, this body completed seven investigations resulting in the dismissal of several government officials. Corruption and impunity were also serious problems in the police force, and the government rarely held security officials accountable or prosecuted them for abuses. Police regularly demands bribes at nightly roadblocks in Nouakchott and at checkpoints between cities. In conclusion, the problem of corruption persists in the country.

## **5. The UN and Mauritania**

## 5.1 Mauritania in the UN

Even if Mauritania became independent from France in 1960, it joined the United Nations solely in 1961, due to an initial veto by the Soviet Union.

The country is currently part of the following UN specialised agencies and organizations:

- Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO)
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO)
- International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)
- International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)
- International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
- International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID)
- International Development Association (IDA)
- International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
- International Finance Corporation (IFC)
- International Labor Organization (ILO)
- International Monetary Fund (IMF)
- International Maritime Organization (IMO)
- International Telecommunications Union (ITU)
- Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA)
- Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
- United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)
- United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)
- Universal Postal Union (UPU)
- World Bank Group (WBG)
- World Health Organization (WHO)
- World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)
- World Meteorological Organization (WMO)
- World Trade Organization (WTO)

List of UN agencies in the Mauritanian territory:

- FAO
- UNHCR
- WHO
- WFP
- UNDP
- UNFPA
- UNICEF

Mauritania is currently involved in the UN peacekeeping mission MINUSMA (Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali).

*Question of Western Sahara, UN General Assembly Resolution 34/37*

The resolution of the United Nations General Assembly about the situation in Western Sahara was adopted on 21 November 1979, during the 34<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly. It became the 18<sup>th</sup> UN General Assembly document regarding the situation of the territory. The resolution stated “the inalienable right of the people of Western Sahara to self-determination and independence, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the Charter of the Organization for African Unity and the objectives of the UN General Assembly Resolution 1514, and the legitimacy of their struggle to secure the enjoyment of that right”. It also welcomed the Algiers Agreement between the Polisario Front and the Mauritania as an important contribution in the process of achieving peace. The resolution, however, deplored the aggravation of the situation resulting from the continued occupation of Western Sahara by Morocco and the extension of that occupation to the territory recently evacuated by Mauritania. Hence, the document urged Morocco to join the peace process and to terminate the occupation of the territory of Western Sahara.

*UN-Mauritania Development Partnership Framework Agreement*

In February 2018 Moctar Ould Diay, the Mauritanian Minister of Economy and Finance, and Mario Samaja, the UN System resident coordinator in Mauritania, signed a five-year Framework Partnership Agreement for the period 2018-2022. This new cooperation will support the implementation of Mauritania’s recently-adopted development and common welfare accelerated strategy, which is considered a reference point for all development policies in the country until 2030. The resources allocated to this programme amount to 662,748,691 US dollars. The five-year partnership framework for sustainable development, hence, aims to contribute to the implementation of sectorial strategies supported by the state, and likely to strengthen human rights and to realize the values and principles of the UN’s 2030 Agenda.



## **6. The EU - Mauritania Relations**

## 6.1 Mauritania and the EU

Mauritania is a signatory of the Economic Partnership Agreement with other 16 West African countries. Moreover, Mauritania's membership in the G5 Sahel makes the country an important partner for the EU's Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel (2015) and the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Stability and Addressing Root Causes of Irregular Migration and Displaced Persons in Africa.

### *Political relations*

The Cotonou Agreement is the main framework for EU-Mauritania relations: as signatory countries they have pledged to respect certain conditions and regulations concerning human rights, governance and the rule of law. In this framework, a series of political dialogue meetings were carried out with the Mauritanian government, opposition parties and the civil society. Following the 2005 coup, the EU decided to finance projects to support the transition process; and during the 2006-2007 elections, the EU sent observers. In 2008 another coup led to the suspension of the EU-Mauritania cooperation and related projects. Such freeze ended in July 2009 when the Dakar Agreement was signed. The latter established the basis for resolving the political crisis and returning to the constitutional rule. Following the agreement, the Mauritanian government undertook a series of commitments to good governance regarding human rights, the participation of civil society, dialogue with the opposition and the opening up of audio-visual media.

### *Economic relations*

The economic relations between Mauritania and the EU also develop within the framework of the Cotonou Agreement, with the European Development Fund (EDF) as the main financial tool, which includes among its instruments: donations, risk capital, and loans to the private sector. It is important to underline that the EU is the first international donor in Mauritania. In 2014 the European Union allocated €195, through the European Development Fund, to the country for enabling the implementation of projects in various areas, covering the 2014-2020 period. This type of financing is provided by the following budgetary instruments:

- the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI)
- the Instrument for Stability
- the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)
- the Humanitarian Aid Instrument

### *Trade relations and Development cooperation*

During the period 2003-2007, more than €120 million were made available to Mauritania through the EDF. These funds were primarily allocated to infrastructure projects, such as the construction of the Rosso-Lexseiba and Kaédi-Gouraye roads, which is on-going. In the timeframe 2008-2013, €56 million were given to Mauritania for launching programmes to support trade and the private sector, and for the implementation of projects resulting from Mauritanian-European cooperation. The latest fund allocated to the country

in 2014 are helping Mauritania with food security, the rule of law and health care. Moreover, the EU allocated further resources:

- Stabex funds finance the project to remove wrecks from the Bay of Nouadhibou;
- Sysmin funds help finance the Nouadhibou ore port;
- various other thematic budget lines for food security, local authorities and non-State actors, human rights, migration-asylum, short-term stability instrument.

### *Dialogue with the civil society*

The EU is also engaged in facilitating the emergence of an active and organised civil society in Mauritania. To this end, the EU encourages dialogue between institutions and citizens, and invites non-State actors and the State to contribute their views to this dialogue. The EDF of 2007-2010 included a programme for supporting civil society and good governance. Furthermore, regular meetings are organised between civil society actors, human rights organisations and representatives of EU member States in Mauritania. These meetings make it possible to take stock of the country's situation, define the needs and demands of local actors, maintain an on-going and open dialogue about Mauritania's opportunities and challenges.

### *Humanitarian support*

Since 2006 the European Union supports humanitarian programmes in Mauritania. In 2017, the EU allocated €1.8 million in humanitarian funding to the country. In total, the EU humanitarian support to Mauritania is of €76.5 million. Such funding helps Mauritania to slowly recover from one of the world's biggest food crises. The EU particularly supports the prevention of malnutrition of the poorest families with children under five years old and pregnant women. It aims to prevent the deterioration of their nutritional status and prevent them from selling their remaining assets in order to buy food. The EU humanitarian assistance also funds nutrition programmes carried out by its humanitarian partners and supports the health system. In addition, European humanitarian funding supports disaster risk reduction, by developing early warning systems and reinforcing the local capacities to prepare for and respond to multiple risks.

## **7. Other regional organisations and Mauritania**

## 7.1 Mauritania's membership to Regional Organizations

Mauritania is a member of the following regional organizations:

- Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (ABEDA)
- African Development Bank (AfDB)
- Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD)
- Arab Monetary Fund (AMF)
- Arab Maghreb Union (AMU)
- Council of Arab Economic Unity (CAEU)
- Islamic Development Bank (IDB)
- Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), joined in 1969.

## 7.2 The African Union and Mauritania

Mauritania joined the African Union in May 1963. Following the August 2005 coup, the African Union (AU) suspended the country from all organisational activities. After the 2007 elections, Mauritania's membership to the AU was restored. However, the 2008 coup led the AU to suspend the country again. The suspension was lifted in 2009 after the military junta agreed with the opposition to organize elections.

Mauritania is also part of the following AU agencies/institutions:

- African Civil Aviation Commission
- African Rehabilitation Institute
- African Commission on Nuclear Energy
- African Telecommunications Union
- African Risk Capacity

In 2014 Mauritania contributed to the AU with about 283,614.52 US dollars.

Recently, in 2018 the African Union has reprimanded Mauritania for not taking action against widespread slavery in the country. In particular, the AU has ordered the Mauritanian government to give financial compensation to two child slaves, who were failed by its legal system. This case represents the first time the AU speaks out against the practice of slavery in Mauritania, which activists believe affects many thousands of people. After lawyers representing the brothers appealed to the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (an AU body charged with protecting child welfare across the region), the committee criticised the leniency of the sentence and said the Mauritanian government was creating a culture of impunity, thus allowing slavery to continue unfettered across the region. Mauritania is now required to pay the two child victims financial compensation and to provide them with psychosocial support and education.

The African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child ruling also demanded that Mauritania take wider actions to prevent child slavery across the region.

## 7.3 The Arab League and Mauritania

After more than a decade of ostracism from intra-Arab affairs caused in large part by Morocco's claim to all of Mauritania, the country joined the Arab League in November 1973. The Arab League membership was also the culmination of Daddah's realignment of Mauritania's foreign relations away from Black Africa and toward the Maghreb and the Middle East. Ould Daddah's decision to join the Arab League, however, was not universally well received at home: some black Mauritanian citizens protested the move, seeing it as potentially short-changing their interests relative to the country's Moors. Nonetheless, subsequent Mauritanian governments maintained a fundamental orientation toward the Arab world, due not only to ethnic affinity, but also in an effort to attract much-needed financial assistance. Ties to the Gulf emirates, though, suffered a severe setback starting in August 1990, when Mauritania's perceived pro-Iraq stance during the Gulf Crisis cost it much goodwill and backing from the wealthy, oil-producing Arab League members who felt most threatened by Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait.

The 2016 Arab League Summit was held in Nouakchott from 25 to 27 June. The meeting focused on Yemen and on discussing the Arab Military Joint Coalition having a bigger role in the region. However, only six of League's 22 Heads of State attended. The summit was originally to be hosted by Morocco and held in Marrakesh on 29 March. In February, however, Morocco decided not to host the summit. The normal procedure is for the League to meet in the next country in alphabetical order, which in this case was Mauritania. President Abdel Aziz saw this as an opportunity for one-upmanship over his northern neighbour, with which relations had already reached a new low. He set out to demonstrate that he could offer the Arab world what Morocco could not.

## **8. Other Practical Info**



## 8.1 Local Customs Cultural Awareness

Mauritanians are considered friendly people, even in Nouakchott, which is overpopulated and poverty-stricken due to urbanization. Elders are respected by the young, this practice is known as “essahwa”, which requires the young to respect social customs in the presence of an elderly person: the youth use appropriate language, avoid public display of affection, and avoid talking too loudly in the presence of the elderly.

### *Meeting Etiquette*

- Men greeting men: a handshake (with the right hand) is the most common form, however the hands are generally not shaken up and down, but clasped and held. It is also common for a man to hold the hand of the other between both hands for the duration of the greeting.
- Women greeting women: the same handshake of men applies to women. Some women will also kiss on both cheeks.
- Men and women: a verbal greeting or nod of acknowledgment is the general norm. For foreign men greeting Mauritanian women it is the best to wait for the woman to extend her hand first (most women will choose not to shake a foreign man's hand). In the case of greeting a mixed group, men and women will shake hands to the members of the same sex, but when they greet a member of the opposite sex, they will place their right hand in the centre of the chest while greeting.

Mauritanian greetings are particularly extended, hence to give the customary “hello” and move on is considered impolite. It is expected that the first time you see someone that day you greet them with the customary series of greetings. The most common initial greeting is Salaama alaykoun (Peace be with you), with a response of Wa alaykoun salaama (And peace be with you). Moors typically say Lyak labass (On you no evil), and the response is Labass (No evil). The Soninke greeting is An moho (hello) and the response is Jam (I am fine). For the Wolof, it is Nanga def, and the response is Jam rekk. Among Pulaar speakers, the first speaker says M'bda and is responded to with Jam tan. Throughout Mauritania, Il humdu li'llah (Praise be to God) is a standard response to good news. Members then exchange details regarding each other's health and wellbeing and that of respective family members.

### *Visiting*

In most kin-based societies, visiting is fundamental to maintaining social harmony within the family unit and the community at large. Consequently, Mauritanians have a relaxed view of time compared to Westerners and value relationship-building. Mauritanians visit each other regularly, for several hours, and oftentimes unannounced, particularly in rural areas where telecommunications are not widely available. Much visiting occurs in the cooler outdoors. Similarly, house guests

are known to remain for several days and will bring gifts from their home region. When invited to a Mauritanian's home, guests commonly remove their shoes before entering. Following initial greetings, the host offers them refreshments.

Guests usually present their host with an inexpensive gift in appreciation for the hospitality. Later, the host serves the traditional mint tea in three ceremonial servings. Guests are obligated to graciously accept refreshments as to decline could be offensive. Although many Mauritanians may live in poverty, they are charitable people whose hospitality is a genuine gesture.

### *Communication Style*

Mauritanians generally are outgoing and friendly people who enjoy engaging in conversation, and display anger in most situations. As in other societies, Mauritanians commonly express themselves using a variety of both verbal and non-verbal gestures. For example, a Mauritanian typically makes a clicking sound with the tongue to acknowledge he is listening attentively or agrees with the speaker. To disagree, he draws air through the teeth with pursed lips.

### *Personal space and eye contact*

When speaking with a casual acquaintance, Mauritanians typically maintain a closer personal space than you may be accustomed to and tend to avoid direct eye contact.

### *Dining Etiquette*

In traditional nomadic society, Mauritanian families typically eat while sitting on floor mats made from animal hides. Prior to dining, they usually wash their hands in a water basin. Using the right hand, Mauritanians share food from communal bowls although adult men and women seldom eat from the same bowl and may even dine in separate rooms. It is customary for participants to dine from the portion of the bowl directly in front of them. Black Africans normally consume their main meal at noontime, while Moors typically share their primary mealtime in the evening.

### *Business Etiquette*

Mauritanians prefer to build relationship prior to conducting business so that the needs of both sides are well understood and mutually beneficial outcomes are easier to achieve. This approach can be a time-consuming process, consequentially, foreign nationals should demonstrate patience, humility, and an interest in local culture in order to foster relationships. It is best not to expect immediate decision, as reaching agreement usually requires follow-on discussions. Disagreements should be handled in a calm, diplomatic manner void of emotion. Moreover, it is helpful to find ways to compromise, even if it results in delays. At this regards, it is important to remember that most Africans are patient and tend to consider time on their side.



## 8.2 Medical Travel Recommendations for Mauritania

Medical facilities are extremely limited in Mauritania, particularly outside Nouakchott and Nouadhibou, where the lack of communications makes dealing with an emergency very difficult. Moreover, medical facilities are understaffed and void of modern equipment and treatment. As with many developing countries, Mauritania suffers from extreme poverty, widespread disease, and a poor healthcare system. Because of poor sanitation and an insufficient potable water supply, infectious and parasitic diseases are common, these include meningitis, cholera, hepatitis, typhoid and yellow fever. Malaria and Rift Valley fever are found in the southern tropical areas along the Senegal River. Contagious diseases such as measles and tuberculosis and respiratory disorders are more predominant in northern areas. Unlike some other African countries, only 0.6% of Mauritania's adult population is infected with the HIV/AIDS virus, which is among the lowest rates throughout Sub-Saharan Africa.

### *Recommended Vaccinations:*

- Typhoid
- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B
- Cholera
- Yellow Fever
- Rabies
- Influenza

*Malaria* is also a risk in the region, hence antimalarial medication is recommended.

*Dengue* and *chikungunya* are two more mosquito-borne infections found in Mauritania. While there is no vaccine against these diseases, repellents and mosquito netting are the best forms of protection.

### *Cholera*

Cholera is present in some parts of Mauritania, hence travellers should take additional precautions including avoiding street food and only using filtered or bottled water.

### *Diarrhoea*

Diseases from food and water are the leading cause of illness in travellers. Prevention consists mainly in: "Boil it, wash it, peel it, cook it... or forget it". Follow these tips for safe eating and drinking:

- wash your hands often with soap and water, especially before eating. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand gel (with at least 60% alcohol);
- drink only bottled or boiled water, or carbonated drinks in cans or bottles. Avoid tap water, fountain drinks, and ice cubes;
- make sure food is fully cooked, avoid eating fruits and vegetables unless they have been peeled or cooked.

Most episodes are self-limiting, clear up within 48 to 72 hours and do not require treatment with antibiotics. The primary goal of treating any form of diarrhoea (viral, bacterial, parasitic or non-infectious) is preventing dehydration or appropriately re-hydrating persons presenting with dehydration.

In particular:

- oral re-hydration solutions (ORS) or similar solutions should be used for re-hydration and absorbed in small, frequent volumes;
- an age-appropriate unrestricted diet is recommended as soon as dehydration is corrected;
- no routine laboratory tests or medications are recommended;
- anti-motility agents such as Loperamid should be considered only for adult patients who do not have a fever or bloody diarrhoea; anti-motility agents may reduce diarrhea output and cramps, but do not accelerate cure.

### *Gas Heater*

You should never go to sleep with your gas heater switched on. The pressure may drop resulting in the flame extinguishing. As a result gas will then leak from the heater. Carbon monoxide poisoning can also be a problem with old appliances.

### *Road Traffic Accidents*

Remember to:

1. wear your safety belt;
2. follow the local customs and laws regarding pedestrian safety and vehicle speed;

3. obey the rules of the road;
4. use helmets on bicycles and motorbikes;
5. avoid boarding an overloaded bus or mini-bus;
6. if not familiar with driving in Mauritania, hire a trustworthy local driver;
7. do not drink and drive.

## 8.3 Other Travel Info

### *Time*

Time zone: GMT (UTC+0)

### *Money*

In 1973, Mauritania resigned from the West African Monetary Union to establish its own currency, the ouguiya (UM), which retained no linkage to the West African franc. One US dollar is equivalent to about 341.6 UM. Notes are in denominations of UM1000, 500, 200, 100, 50, 10, and 5. Coins are in denominations of UM20, 10, 5, and 1, and 1 and 0.2 khoums.

The import or export of local currency is illegal in Mauritania. Credit cards are accepted only at a few major hotels in Nouakchott. Currency and traveller's checks can be exchanged at most banks.

### *Climate*

Most of Mauritania is hot and dry and receives practically no rain. The south, however, experiences a rainy season from July to September. The coast is tempered by trade winds and is mild with the exception of the hot Nouakchott region (where the rainy season begins a month later). Deserts are cooler and windy in March and April.

Mauritania has four climatic zones:

1. The Sahara Desert region typically receives 25 to 125 millimeters of rain during the rainy season. During winter (December through April), the mean daily minimum temperature is 0° C and the mean daily maximum is 38°C. In contrast, summer (May through October) has a mean daily maximum temperature of 49°C and a mean daily minimum of 16°C. Desert conditions are intensified by hot, dry, blinding sandstorms, which occur primarily in March and April.
2. The Senegal River Valley zone has the highest rainfall in the country, with up to 660 millimeters of rain per year, beginning in May and lasting through September. The mean daily maximum temperature is 34°C, while the mean daily minimum drops to approximately 23°C.
3. The Sahelian zone has a rainy season from July through October, producing an average annual rainfall of approximately 460 millimeters. Temperature extremes are less severe than in the Sahara.
4. The coastal zone has a humid but temperate climate modified by the trade winds. Annual rainfall usually is less than 25 millimeters. The mean daily maximum temperature is approximately 31°C, while the mean daily minimum temperature is approximately 20°C. Severe cyclones can occur from September through April. Throughout this area the trade winds blow steadily from a northerly direction, usually parallel to the coast, with speeds predominately between 7 and 17 knots. Nouakchott also has been hit by dust storms for up to 9 months. Harmattan winds (in November - April) often cause blinding sandstorms due to dust and haze carried from the Sahara. Fog, not as frequent as the harmattan, is more common along the coast. The strengthening of the sea breeze and temperature contrast between the land and water help increase occurrences of fog along the coast. The northern coast, with no terrain blocking features, has a higher frequency of fog than the southern coast. Most fog develops around sunset and lasts until mid-morning. Thunderstorms occur approximately 1 day a month throughout the Mauritania region.

## 8.4 Radio Transmissions

The radio is not a secure means of communication as it can be listened to by practically anyone. It is useful to establish a set of simple code words, which should be known by everyone in the network. In no case should military information be transmitted.

### *Basic Rules*

Discipline: listen before transmitting. Brevity: be brief and to the point. Rhythm: use short complete phrases that make sense. Speed: not too fast, not too slow. Volume: don't shout. Preparation: know what you are going to say before transmitting.

### *Prior to transmission*

- a. Check the power source and cables to ensure there is a power supply.
- b. Check the antenna and cables ensuring a tight and correct connection to the radio set.
- c. Connect the audio accessories and check the functioning of switches.

### *Transmitting*

- a. Make your message brief but precise.
- b. Break the message into sensible passages with pauses between.
- c. Make sure no-one else is transmitting at the same time.
- d. When transmitting maintain a high standard of articulation, normal rhythm and moderate volume. Do not shout. Hold the microphone close to your mouth.
- e. Avoid excessive calling and unofficial voice procedure.

### *Four Golden Rules*

Clarity; Brevity; Security; Simplicity.

Respect these rules; your radios may be the only link to the outside world. Don't interfere with radios unless you are a trained technician. Don't use the radio like a telephone, keep transmissions short. Organize your thinking and your message before transmitting. Security matters are best dealt with by using simple code words; likewise when dealing with sensitive issues.

### *Procedure Words*

A proword is a word or phrase, which has been given a special meaning in order to speed up the handling of messages. The only authorised prowords are listed below:

Prowords explanation:

**BREAK**

I now indicate a separation of the text from other portions of the message.

**CORRECT**

You are correct, or what you have transmitted is correct.

**CORRECTION**

I have made an error in this transmission. I will continue from the last correct word.

**I SAY AGAIN**

I am repeating my transmission again.

**MESSAGE**

A message follows: prepare to copy or record it.

**MORE TO FOLLOW**

The transmitting station has additional traffic for the receiving station.

**OUT**

This is the end of my transmission to you and no answer is required.

**OVER**

This is the end of my transmission to you and a response is expected. Go ahead transmit.

**READ BACK**

Repeat this entire transmission back to me exactly as received.

**ROGER**

I have received your last transmission satisfactorily.

**SPEAK SLOWER**

You are speaking too fast. Please speak slower.

**STAND-BY**

Do not transmit until contacted: I need extra time.

THIS IS

Give call sign, i.e. "Delta one".

WAIT

I must pause for a few seconds, please wait.

WAIT OUT

I must pause longer than a few seconds, I will return.

WILCO

I have received your signal, understand it, and will comply (do not use roger and wilco together).

WRONG

Your last transmission was incorrect the correct version was ...

### *Phonetics*

The international phonetic alphabet listed below shall be used. Numerals shall be transmitted digit by digit except round figures such as hundreds and thousands.

Examples:

Message examples:

To give you confidence, make sure you practise using the radio before you find yourself in urgent need of using it. An example of the kind of language you must learn to use is shown right. It is an example of a radio check:

### *Call*

Five - Two, Five - Two, this is Hotel – Three - Niner, Hotel – Three - Niner. Radio check. Over.

### *Reply*

Hotel – Three - Niner, from Five - Two. I read you loud and clear. Over.

### *Call*

Five - Two from Hotel – Three - Niner. Loud and clear. Over.

### *Reply*

From Five-Two. Roger. Out.

## **What to do in an emergency**

Call for help as follows:

emergency. emergency. emergency.

Five-two five-two. this is hotel-three-niner, hotel-three-niner. emergency. do you copy? over. (Note: emergency is repeated three times).

Wait for response and then proceed. For a lesser degree of urgency, use the word "security" instead of "emergency". Any station hearing an "emergency" or "security" call, should immediately stop transmitting and listen out. If you need to interrupt another radio conversation wait for a pause (immediately after you hear "over"); call: break. break. this is hotel-three-niner, hotel-three-niner. I have an emergency. please stand by.

Pause transmission and listen to ensure the other communication has ceased, then proceed with emergency call.

12 wun too;

44 fo-wer fo-wer;

90 niner zero;

136 wun three six;

500 fi-yiv hundred;

7000 seven thousand;

16000 wun six thousand;

1278 wun too seven ate;

19A wun niner alfa



| CHARACTER | MORSE CODE | TELEPHONY | PHONIC (PRONUNCIATION)          |
|-----------|------------|-----------|---------------------------------|
| A         | • —        | Alfa      | (AL-FAH)                        |
| B         | — • • •    | Bravo     | (BRAH-VOH)                      |
| C         | — • — •    | Charlie   | (CHAR-LEE) or (SHAR-LEE)        |
| D         | — • •      | Delta     | (DELL-TAH)                      |
| E         | •          | Echo      | (ECK-OH)                        |
| F         | • • — •    | Foxtrot   | (FOKS-TROT)                     |
| G         | — — •      | Golf      | (GOLF)                          |
| H         | • • • •    | Hotel     | (HOH-TEL)                       |
| I         | • •        | India     | (IN-DEE-AH)                     |
| J         | • — — —    | Juliett   | (JEW-LEE-ETT)                   |
| K         | — • —      | Kilo      | (KEY-LOH)                       |
| L         | • — • •    | Lim a     | (LEE-MAH)                       |
| M         | — —        | Mike      | (MIKE)                          |
| N         | — •        | November  | (NO-VEM-BER)                    |
| O         | — — —      | Oscar     | (OSS-CAH)                       |
| P         | • — — •    | Papa      | (PAH-PAH)                       |
| Q         | — — • —    | Quebec    | (KEH-BECK)                      |
| R         | • — •      | Romeo     | (ROW-ME-OH)                     |
| S         | • • •      | Sierra    | (SEE-AIR-RAH)                   |
| T         | —          | Tango     | (TANG-GO)                       |
| U         | • • —      | Uniform   | (YOU-NEE-FORM) or (OO-NEE-FORM) |
| V         | • • • —    | Victor    | (VIK-TAH)                       |
| W         | • — —      | Whiskey   | (WISS-KEY)                      |
| X         | — • • —    | Xray      | (ECKS-RAY)                      |
| Y         | — • — —    | Yankee    | (YANG-KEY)                      |
| Z         | — — • •    | Zulu      | (ZOO-LOO)                       |
| 1         | • — — — —  | One       | (WUN)                           |
| 2         | • • — — —  | Two       | (TOO)                           |
| 3         | • • • — —  | Three     | (TREE)                          |
| 4         | • • • • —  | Four      | (FOW-ER)                        |
| 5         | • • • • •  | Five      | (FIFE)                          |
| 6         | — • • • •  | Six       | (SIX)                           |
| 7         | — — • • •  | Seven     | (SEV-EN)                        |
| 8         | — — — • •  | Eight     | (AIT)                           |
| 9         | — — — — •  | Nine      | (NIN-ER)                        |
| 0         | — — — — —  | Zero      | (ZEE-RO)                        |

## **9. Useful contacts**

### *Emergencies*

In case of emergency in Mauritania, call the following emergency numbers:

Fire – 18

Police – 17

Traffic Police – 19

Ambulance – 101

Mauritanian police and emergency services are below Western European and U.S. standards in terms of training, responsiveness, and effectiveness. Visitors to Mauritania should note that Mauritanian law enforcement and emergency response officials generally do not speak English, and translators are not readily available.

### *Embassies*

Embassy of the France Republic in Mauritania

Chief: Mr. Joël Meyer

Ambassador

Address: Rue Ahmed Ould M'Hamed, Tévragh Zeina, Nouakchott, Mauritania

Phone: (+222) 45 29 96 99

Fax: (+222) 45 25 69 38

Email: [ambafrance.nouakchott-amba@diplomatie.gouv.fr](mailto:ambafrance.nouakchott-amba@diplomatie.gouv.fr)

Website: [mr.ambafrance.org](http://mr.ambafrance.org); <http://www.france-mauritanie.mr>

Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Mauritania

Chief: Mrs. Carola Müller-Holtkemper,

Ambassador

Address: Rue Mamadou Konaté, Tévragh Zeina, B.P. 372, Nouakchott, Mauritania

Phone: (+222) 45 25 17 29, (+222) 45 25 10 32

Fax: (+222) 45 25 17 22

Email: [info@nouakchott.diplo.de](mailto:info@nouakchott.diplo.de)

Website: [www.nouakchott.diplo.de](http://www.nouakchott.diplo.de)

Embassy of the Kingdom of Spain

Chief: Antonio Torres-Dulce Ruiz

Ambassador

Address: Rue Mamadou Konaté, P.O. Box 232, Nouakchott, Mauritania

Phone: (+222) 4529 86 50, (+222) 4525 20 80

Fax: (+222) 4525 40 88

Email: [emb.nouakchott@maec.es](mailto:emb.nouakchott@maec.es)

Website: <http://www.exteriores.gob.es/Embajadas/Nouakchott>

Delegation of the European Union to Mauritania

Chief: Mr. Giacomo Durazo

Ambassador

Address: Rue 42-163, B.P. 213, Tévragh Zeina, Nouakchott

Phone: (00222) 45 25 27 24

Fax: (00222) 45 25 35 24

Email: [delegation-mauritania@eeas.europa.eu](mailto:delegation-mauritania@eeas.europa.eu)

Website: [https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/mauritania\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/mauritania_en)

### *International Organisations*

United Nations Development Programme in Mauritania

Address: BP 620, Nouakchott, Mauritania

Phone: (00222) 45 25 24 09

Fax: (00222) 45 25 26 16

Email: [registry.mr@undp.org](mailto:registry.mr@undp.org)

Website:

<http://www.mr.undp.org/content/mauritania/fr/home/about-us.html>

Food and Agriculture Organization Representation in Mauritania

Chief: Mr. Athman Mravili

Representative of FAO

Address: Rue 46-067 NOT n°562 Las Palmas, PO Box 665, Nouakchott, Mauritania

Phone: (00222) 45253157

Fax: (00222) 45253467

Email: [FAO-MR@fao.org](mailto:FAO-MR@fao.org)

Website: <http://coin.fao.org/cms/do/fr/office.html?officeCode=F>  
NMAU

The United Nations International Children's Fund in Mauritania

Address: Ilot K, Parcelle 146/151, Nouakchott, Mauritania

Phone: (+222) 45299800

Fax: (+222) 45251346

Email: [nouakchott@unicef.org](mailto:nouakchott@unicef.org)

Website:

[https://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/mauritania\\_contact.html](https://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/mauritania_contact.html)

The UN Refugee Agency Representation in Mauritania

Address: Ilot K No. 143, Route de la Corniche, B.P. 4405, Nouakchott, Mauritania

Phone: (+222) 5257415

Fax: (+222) 5256176

Email: [mauno@unhcr.org](mailto:mauno@unhcr.org)

Website: <http://www.unhcr.org/mauritania.html>

World Food Programme

Address: Ilot K Lot No. 217A, Nouakchott, Mauritania

Phone: (222) 45 25 27 93

Fax: (222) 45 25 32 84

Email: [WFP.Nouakchott@wfp.org](mailto:WFP.Nouakchott@wfp.org)

Website: <http://www1.wfp.org/countries/mauritania>

World Health Organization  
Chief: Dr Abdou Salam Gueye  
WHO Representative  
Address: ILOT K 140-141 Tévragh-Zeina, Route de la Corniche  
Ouest, B.P. 320, Nouakchott, Mauritania  
Phone: (222) 45259951  
Fax: (222) 525 86 44  
Email: [gueyea@who.int](mailto:gueyea@who.int); [afwcomr@who.int](mailto:afwcomr@who.int)  
Website: <http://www.afro.who.int/fr/countries/mauritania>

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