



MAURITANIA



INTRODUCTION

Berbers moved south into the area of today's Mauritania beginning in the 3rd century. Beginning in the 8th century, Mauritania experienced a slow but constant infiltration of Arabs and Arab influence from the north. The French colonized Mauritania in the late 19th century. The country gained independence from France in 1960.

GOVERNMENT

Chief of State

President Mohamed Ould Cheikh GHAZOUANI

Head of Government

Prime Minister Mohamed Ould BILAL

Government Type

presidential republic

Capital

Nouakchott

Legislature

unicameral Parliament or Barlamane consists of the National Assembly or Al Jamiya Al Wataniya (157 seats; 5-year terms)

GEOGRAPHY

Area

Total: 1,030,700 sq km
Land: 1,030,700 sq km
Water: 0 sq km

Climate

desert; constantly hot, dry, dusty

Natural Resources

iron ore, gypsum, copper, phosphate, diamonds, gold, oil, fish

ECONOMY

Economic Overview

lower middle-income West African economy; primarily agrarian; rising urbanization; poor property rights; systemic corruption; endemic social and workforce tensions; wide-scale terrorism; foreign over-fishing; environmentally fragile

GDP (Purchasing Power Parity) \$23.17 billion (2020 est.)

GDP per capita (Purchasing Power Parity) \$5,000 (2020 est.)

Industries - fish processing, oil production, mining (iron ore, gold, copper)

Agricultural products - rice, milk, goat milk, sheep milk, sorghum, mutton, beef, camel milk, camel meat, dates

Exports \$321 million (2019 est.)

iron ore, fish products, gold, mollusks, processed crustaceans (2019)

partners: China 32%, Switzerland 13%, Spain 9%, Japan 9%, Italy 5% (2019)

Imports \$318 million (2019 est.)

ships, aircraft, wheat, raw sugar, refined petroleum (2019)

partners: China 26%, France 6%, Spain 6%, Morocco 6%, UAE 5% (2019)

PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Population

4.1 million (July 2021 est.)

Population Growth

2.02% (2021 est.)

Ethnicity

Black Moors

(Haratines - Arab-speaking descendants of African origin who are or were enslaved by white Moors) 40%, White Moors (of Arab-Berber descent, known as Beydane) 30%, Sub-Saharan Mauritians (non-Arabic speaking, largely resident in or originating from the Senegal River Valley, including Halpulaar, Fulani, Soninke, Wolof, and Bambara ethnic groups) 30%

Language

Arabic (official and national), Pular, Soninke, Wolof (all national languages), French

Religion

Muslim (official) 100%

