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Chapter 1

155

1.1 155.guide

Texified version of data for Mauritania.

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Mauritania

1.2 155.guide/Mauritania

Mauritania

Geography (Mauritania)
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 Economy (Mauritania)
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1.3 155.guide/Geography (Mauritania)

Geography (Mauritania)

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Location:

Northern Africa, along the North Atlantic Ocean, between Western Sahara and Senegal

Map references:

Africa, Standard Time Zones of the World

Area:

total area:

1,030,700 km²

land area:

1,030,400 km²

comparative area:

slightly larger than three times the size of New Mexico

Land boundaries:

total 5,074 km, Algeria 463 km, Mali 2,237 km, Senegal 813 km, Western Sahara 1,561 km

Coastline:

754 km

Maritime claims:

contiguous zone:

24 nm

continental shelf:

200 nm or the edge of continental margin

exclusive economic zone:

200 nm

territorial sea:

12 nm

International disputes:

boundary with Senegal

Climate:

desert; constantly hot, dry, dusty

Terrain:

mostly barren, flat plains of the Sahara; some central hills

Natural resources:

iron ore, gypsum, fish, copper, phosphate

Land use:

arable land:

1%

permanent crops:
 0%
 meadows and pastures:
 38%
 forest and woodland:
 5%
 other:
 56%
 Irrigated land:
 120 km2 (1989 est.)
 Environment:
 hot, dry, dust/sand-laden sirocco wind blows primarily in March and April;
 desertification; only perennial river is the Senegal

1.4 155.guide/People (Mauritania)

People (Mauritania)

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Population:
 2,124,792 (July 1993 est.)
 Population growth rate:
 3.14% (1993 est.)
 Birth rate:
 47.97 births/1,000 population (1993 est.)
 Death rate:
 16.54 deaths/1,000 population (1993 est.)
 Net migration rate:
 0 migrant(s)/1,000 population (1993 est.)
 Infant mortality rate:
 87 deaths/1,000 live births (1993 est.)
 Life expectancy at birth:
 total population:
 47.59 years
 male:
 44.81 years
 female:
 50.48 years (1993 est.)
 Total fertility rate:
 7.05 children born/woman (1993 est.)
 Nationality:
 noun:
 Mauritanian(s)
 adjective:
 Mauritanian
 Ethnic divisions:
 mixed Maur/black 40%, Maur 30%, black 30%
 Religions:
 Muslim 100%
 Languages:
 Hasaniya Arabic (official), Pular, Soninke, Wolof (official)
 Literacy:
 age 10 and over can read and write (1990)

total population:
 34%
 male:
 47%
 female:
 21%
 Labor force:
 465,000 (1981 est.); 45,000 wage earners (1980)
 by occupation:
 agriculture 47%, services 29%, industry and commerce 14%, government 10%
 note:
 53% of population of working age (1985)

1.5 155.guide/Government (Mauritania)

Government (Mauritania)

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Names:

conventional long form:

Islamic Republic of Mauritania

conventional short form:

Mauritania local long form:

Al Jumhuriyah al Islamiyah al Muritaniyah

local short form:

Muritaniyah

Digraph:

MR

Type:

republic

Capital:

Nouakchott

Administrative divisions:

12 regions (regions, singular - region); Adrar, Assaba, Brakna, Dakhlet
 Nouadhibou, Gorgol, Guidimaka, Hodh ech Chargui, Hodh el Gharbi, Inchiri,
 Tagant, Tiris Zemmour, Trarza

note:

there may be a new capital district of Nouakchott

Independence:

28 November 1960 (from France)

Constitution:

12 July 1991

Legal system:

three-tier system: Islamic (Shari'a) courts, special courts, state security
 courts (in the process of being eliminated)

National holiday:

Independence Day, 28 November (1960)

Political parties and leaders:

legalized by constitution passed 12 July 1991, however, politics continue ↔
 to

be tribally based; emerging parties include Democratic and Social ↔
 Republican

Party (PRDS), led by President Col. Maaouya Ould Sid'Ahmed TAYA; Union of

Democratic Forces - New Era (UFD/NE), headed by Ahmed Ould DADDAH; Assembly for Democracy and Unity (RDU), Ahmed Ould SIDI BABA; Popular Social and Democratic Union (UPSD), Mohamed Mahmoud Ould MAH; Mauritanian Party for Renewal (PMR), Hameida BOUCHRAYA; National Avant-Garde Party (PAN), Khattry Ould JIDDOU; Mauritanian Party of the Democratic Center (PCDM), Bamba Ould SIDI BADI

Other political or pressure groups:

Mauritanian Workers Union (UTM)

Suffrage:

18 years of age; universal

Elections:

President:

last held January 1992 (next to be held January 1998); results - President Col. Maaouya Ould Sid 'Ahmed TAYA elected

Senate:

last held 3 and 10 April 1992 (one-third of the seats up for re-election in 1994)

National Assembly:

last held 6 and 13 March 1992 (next to be held March 1997)

Executive branch:

president

Legislative branch:

bicameral legislature consists of an upper house or Senate (Majlis al-Shuyukh) and a lower house or National Assembly (Majlis al-Watani)

1.6 155.guide/Government (Mauritania 2. usage)

Government (Mauritania 2. usage)

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Judicial branch:

Supreme Court (Cour Supreme)

Leaders:

Chief of State and Head of Government:

President Col. Maaouya Ould Sid 'Ahmed TAYA (since 12 December 1984)

Member of:

ABEDA, ACCT (associate), ACP, AfDB, AFESD, AL, AMF, AMU, CAEU, CCC, CEO, ECA, ECOWAS, FAO, G-77, GATT, IBRD, ICAO, IDA, IDB, IFAD, IFC, ILO, IMF, IMO, INTELSAT, INTERPOL, IOC, ITU, LORCS, NAM, OAU, OIC, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO ←

UNIDO, UPU, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO

Diplomatic representation in US:

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Flag:

green with a yellow five-pointed star above a yellow, horizontal crescent; the closed side of the crescent is down; the crescent, star, and color ←
green
are traditional symbols of Islam

1.7 155.guide/Economy (Mauritania)

Economy (Mauritania)

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Overview:

A majority of the population still depends on agriculture and livestock for a livelihood, even though most of the nomads and many subsistence farmers were forced into the cities by recurrent droughts in the 1970s and 1980s. Mauritania has extensive deposits of iron ore, which account for almost 50% of total exports. The decline in world demand for this ore, however, has ←
led
to cutbacks in production. The nation's coastal waters are among the ←
richest
fishing areas in the world, but overexploitation by foreigners threatens this key source of revenue. The country's first deepwater port opened near Nouakchott in 1986. In recent years, the droughts, the endemic conflict ←
with
Senegal, rising energy costs, and economic mismanagement have resulted in a substantial buildup of foreign debt. The government has begun the second stage of an economic reform program in consultation with the World Bank, ←
the
IMF, and major donor countries. But the reform process suffered a major setback following the Gulf war of early 1991. Because of Mauritania's support of SADDAM Husayn, bilateral aid from its two top donors, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, was suspended, and multilateral aid was reduced.

National product:

GDP - exchange rate conversion - \$1.1 billion (1991 est.)

National product real growth rate:

3% (1991 est.)

National product per capita:

\$555 (1991 est.)

Inflation rate (consumer prices):

6.2% (1991 est.)

Unemployment rate:

20% (1991 est.)

Budget:

revenues \$280 million; expenditures \$346 million, including capital expenditures of \$61 million (1989 est.)

Exports:

\$447 million (f.o.b., 1990)

commodities:
 iron ore, processed fish, small amounts of gum arabic and gypsum; ←
 unrecorded
 but numerically significant cattle exports to Senegal
 partners:
 EC 43%, Japan 27%, USSR 11%, Cote d'Ivoire 3%

Imports:
 \$385 million (c.i.f., 1990)
 commodities:
 foodstuffs, consumer goods, petroleum products, capital goods
 partners:
 EC 60%, Algeria 15%, China 6%, US 3%

External debt:
 \$1.9 billion (1990)

Industrial production:
 growth rate 4.4% (1988 est.); accounts for almost 33% of GDP

Electricity:
 190,000 kW capacity; 135 million kWh produced, 70 kWh per capita (1991)

Industries:
 fish processing, mining of iron ore and gypsum

Agriculture:
 accounts for 50% of GDP (including fishing); largely subsistence farming ←
 and
 nomadic cattle and sheep herding except in Senegal river valley; crops -
 dates, millet, sorghum, root crops; fish products number-one export; large
 food deficit in years of drought

1.8 155.guide/Economy (Mauritania 2. usage)

Economy (Mauritania 2. usage)

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Economic aid:
 US commitments, including Ex-Im (FY70-89), \$168 million; Western (non-US)
 countries, ODA and OOF bilateral commitments (1970-89), \$1.3 billion; OPEC
 bilateral aid (1979-89), \$490 million; Communist countries (1970-89), \$277
 million; Arab Development Bank (1991), \$20 million

Currency:
 1 ouguiya (UM) = 5 khoums

Exchange rates:
 ouguiya (UM) per US\$1 - 116.990 (February 1993), 87.082 (1992), 81.946
 (1991), 80.609 (1990), 83.051 (1989), 75.261 (1988)

Fiscal year:
 calendar year

1.9 155.guide/Communications (Mauritania)

Communications (Mauritania)

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Railroads:

690 km 1.435-meter (standard) gauge, single track, owned and operated by government mining company

Highways:

7,525 km total; 1,685 km paved; 1,040 km gravel, crushed stone, or otherwise improved; 4,800 km unimproved roads, trails, tracks

Inland waterways:

mostly ferry traffic on the Senegal River

Ports:

Nouadhibou, Nouakchott

Merchant marine:

1 cargo ship (1,000 GRT or over) totaling 1,290 GRT/1,840 DWT

Airports:

total:

29

usable:

29

with permanent-surface runways:

9

with runways over 3,659 m:

1

with runways 2,440-3,659 m:

5

with runways 1,220-2,439 m:

16

Telecommunications:

poor system of cable and open-wire lines, minor microwave radio relay links and radio communications stations (improvements being made); broadcast stations - 2 AM, no FM, 1 TV; satellite earth stations - 1 Atlantic Ocean INTELSAT and 2 ARABSAT, with six planned

1.10 155.guide/Defense Forces (Mauritania)

Defense Forces (Mauritania)

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Branches:

Army, Navy, Air Force, National Gendarmerie, National Guard, National Police, Presidential Guard

Manpower availability:

males age 15-49 452,008; fit for military service 220,717 (1993 est.); conscription law not implemented

Defense expenditures:

exchange rate conversion - \$40 million, 4.2% of GDP (1989)