



Africa :: Mauritania

Introduction :: Mauritania

Background:

Independent from France in 1960, Mauritania annexed the southern third of the former Spanish Sahara (now Western Sahara) in 1976 but relinquished it after three years of raids by the Polisario guerrilla front seeking independence for the territory. Maaouya Ould Sid Ahmed TAYA seized power in a coup in 1984 and ruled Mauritania with a heavy hand for more than two decades. A series of presidential elections that he held were widely seen as flawed. A bloodless coup in August 2005 deposed President TAYA and ushered in a military council that oversaw a transition to democratic rule. Independent candidate Sidi Ould Cheikh ABDALLAHI was inaugurated in April 2007 as Mauritania's first freely and fairly elected president. His term ended prematurely in August 2008 when a military junta led by General Mohamed Ould Abdel AZIZ deposed him and installed a military council government. AZIZ was subsequently elected president in July 2009 and sworn in the following month. AZIZ sustained injuries from an accidental shooting by his own troops in October 2012 but has continued to maintain his authority. The country continues to experience ethnic tensions among its black population (Afro-Mauritanians) and white and black Moor (Arab-Berber) communities, and is having to confront a growing terrorism threat by al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).

Geography :: Mauritania

Location:

Western Africa, bordering the North Atlantic Ocean, between Senegal and Western Sahara

Geographic coordinates:

20 00 N, 12 00 W

Map references:

Africa

Area:

total: 1,030,700 sq km
country comparison to the world: 29
land: 1,030,700 sq km
water: 0 sq km

Area - comparative:

slightly larger than three times the size of New Mexico

Land boundaries:

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

Coastline:

754 km

Maritime claims:

territorial sea: 12 nm
contiguous zone: 24 nm
exclusive economic zone: 200 nm
continental shelf: 200 nm or to the edge of the continental margin

Climate:

desert; constantly hot, dry, dusty

Terrain:

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

Elevation extremes:
lowest point: Sebkhet Te-n-Dghamcha -5 m
highest point: Kediet Ijill 915 m
Natural resources:
iron ore, gypsum, copper, phosphate, diamonds, gold, oil, fish
Land use:
arable land: 0.44%
permanent crops: 0.01%
other: 99.55% (2011)
Irrigated land:
450.1 sq km (2004)
Total renewable water resources:
11.4 cu km (2011)
Freshwater withdrawal (domestic/industrial/agricultural):
total: 1.35 cu km/yr (7%/2%/91%)
per capita: 420.2 cu m/yr (2005)
Natural hazards:
hot, dry, dust/sand-laden sirocco wind blows primarily in March and April; periodic droughts
Environment - current issues:
overgrazing, deforestation, and soil erosion aggravated by drought are contributing to desertification; limited natural freshwater resources away from the Senegal, which is the only perennial river; locust infestation
Environment - international agreements:
party to: Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, Endangered Species, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution, Wetlands, Whaling
signed, but not ratified: none of the selected agreements
Geography - note:
most of the population is concentrated in the cities of Nouakchott and Nouadhibou and along the Senegal River in the southern part of the country

People and Society :: **Mauritania**

Nationality:
noun: Mauritanian(s)
adjective: Mauritanian
Ethnic groups:
mixed Moor/black 40%, Moor 30%, black 30%
Languages:
Arabic (official and national), Pulaar, Soninke, Wolof (all national languages), French, Hassaniya
Religions:
Muslim (official) 100%
Population:
3,437,610 (July 2013 est.)
country comparison to the world: 134
Age structure:
0-14 years: 39.8% (male 686,596/female 681,224)
15-24 years: 20% (male 335,998/female 351,367)
25-54 years: 32.2% (male 512,045/female 595,195)
55-64 years: 4.5% (male 68,960/female 84,303)
65 years and over: 3.5% (male 51,736/female 70,186) (2013 est.)
Dependency ratios:
total dependency ratio: 76.3 %
youth dependency ratio: 70.7 %
elderly dependency ratio: 5.6 %
potential support ratio: 17.9 (2013)
Median age:
total: 19.8 years
male: 18.8 years
female: 20.7 years (2013 est.)
Population growth rate:

2.29% (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 37

Birth rate:

32.31 births/1,000 population (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 36

Death rate:

8.5 deaths/1,000 population (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 83

Net migration rate:

-0.87 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 146

Urbanization:

urban population: 41.5% of total population (2011)

rate of urbanization: 2.91% annual rate of change (2010-15 est.)

Major urban areas - population:

NOUAKCHOTT (capital) 709,000 (2009)

Sex ratio:

at birth: 1.03 male(s)/female

0-14 years: 1.01 male(s)/female

15-24 years: 0.96 male(s)/female

25-54 years: 0.86 male(s)/female

55-64 years: 0.82 male(s)/female

65 years and over: 0.74 male(s)/female

total population: 0.93 male(s)/female (2013 est.)

Mother's mean age at first birth:

21.9 (2001 est.)

Maternal mortality rate:

510 deaths/100,000 live births (2010)

country comparison to the world: 19

Infant mortality rate:

total: 57.48 deaths/1,000 live births

country comparison to the world: 31

male: 62.51 deaths/1,000 live births

female: 52.3 deaths/1,000 live births (2013 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 61.91 years

country comparison to the world: 188

male: 59.65 years

female: 64.23 years (2013 est.)

Total fertility rate:

4.15 children born/woman (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 36

Contraceptive prevalence rate:

9.3% (2007)

Health expenditures:

4.4% of GDP (2010)

country comparison to the world: 157

Physicians density:

0.13 physicians/1,000 population (2009)

Hospital bed density:

0.4 beds/1,000 population (2006)

Drinking water source:

improved:

urban: 52% of population

rural: 48% of population

total: 50% of population

unimproved:

urban: 48% of population

rural: 52% of population
total: 50% of population (2010 est.)

Sanitation facility access:

improved:

urban: 51% of population
rural: 9% of population
total: 26% of population

unimproved:

urban: 49% of population
rural: 91% of population
total: 74% of population (2010 est.)

HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate:

0.7% (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 60

HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS:

14,000 (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 87

HIV/AIDS - deaths:

fewer than 1,000 (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 76

Major infectious diseases:

degree of risk: very high

food or waterborne diseases: bacterial and protozoal diarrhea, hepatitis A, and typhoid fever

vectorborne diseases: malaria and dengue fever

respiratory disease: meningococcal meningitis

animal contact disease: rabies (2013)

Obesity - adult prevalence rate:

12.7% (2008)

country comparison to the world: 127

Children under the age of 5 years underweight:

15.9% (2008)

country comparison to the world: 48

Education expenditures:

3.9% of GDP (2011)

country comparison to the world: 114

Literacy:

definition: age 15 and over can read and write

total population: 58.6%

male: 65.3%

female: 52% (2011 est.)

School life expectancy (primary to tertiary education):

total: 8 years

male: 8 years

female: 8 years (2011)

Child labor - children ages 5-14:

total number: 127,251

percentage: 16 % (2007 est.)

Government :: Mauritania

Country name:

conventional long form: Islamic Republic of Mauritania

conventional short form: Mauritania

local long form: Al Jumhuriyah al Islamiyah al Muritaniyah

local short form: Muritaniyah

Government type:

military junta

Capital:

name: Nouakchott
geographic coordinates: 18 04 N, 15 58 W
time difference: UTC 0 (5 hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time)

Administrative divisions:
13 regions (wilayas, singular - wilaya); Adrar, Assaba, Brakna, Dakhlet Nouadhibou, Gorgol, Guidimaka, Hodh ech Chargui, Hodh el Gharbi, Inchiri, Nouakchott, Tagant, Tiris Zemmour, Trarza

Independence:
28 November 1960 (from France)

National holiday:
Independence Day, 28 November (1960)

Constitution:
12 July 1991

Legal system:
mixed legal system of Islamic and French civil law

International law organization participation:
has not submitted an ICJ jurisdiction declaration; non-party state to the ICCt

Suffrage:
18 years of age; universal

Executive branch:
chief of state: President Mohamed Ould Abdel AZIZ (since 5 August 2009); note - AZIZ, who deposed democratically elected President Sidi Ould Cheikh ABDELLAHI in a coup and installed himself as President of the High State Council on 6 August 2008, retired from the military and stepped down from the presidency in April 2009 to run for president; he was elected president in an election held on 18 July 2009
head of government: Prime Minister Moulaye Ould Mohamed LAGHDAF (since 14 August 2008)
cabinet: Council of Ministers
(For more information visit the **World Leaders website** [🌐](#))
elections: president elected by popular vote for a five-year term; election last held on 18 July 2009 (next to be held by 2014)
election results: percent of vote - Mohamed Ould Abdel AZIZ 52.6%, Messaoud Ould BOULKHEIR 16.3%, Ahmed Ould DADDAH 13.7%, other 17.4%

Legislative branch:
bicameral legislature consists of the Senate or Majlis al-Shuykh (56 seats; 53 members elected by municipal leaders and 3 members elected for Mauritansians abroad to serve six-year terms; a portion of seats up for election every two years) and the National Assembly or Al Jamiya Al Wataniya (95 seats; members elected by popular vote to serve five-year terms)
elections: Senate - last held in November 2009; National Assembly - last held on 19 November and 3 December 2006 (election scheduled for 16 October 2011 postponed, rescheduled for 31 March 2012 and then postponed indefinitely)
election results: Senate - percent of vote by party - NA; seats by party - CPM (Coalition of Majority Parties) 45, COD 7, RNRD-TAWASSOUL 4; National Assembly - percent of vote by party - NA; seats by party - CPM 63 (UPR 50, PRDR 7, UDP 3, HATEM-PMUC 2, RD 1), COD 27 (RFD 9, UFP 6, APP 6, PNDD-ADIL 6), RNRD-TAWASSOUL 4, FP 1

Judicial branch:
highest court(s): Supreme Court or Cour Supreme (subdivided into 1 criminal and 2 civil chambers, each with a president and 5 counselors); Constitutional Council (consists of 6 members)
judge selection and term of office: Supreme Court president appointed by the president of the republic to serve a 5-year renewable term; Constitutional Council members appointed - 3 by the president of the republic, 2 by the president of the National Assembly, and 1 by the president of the Senate; members serve single, 9-year terms with one-third of membership renewed every 3 years
subordinate courts: High Court of Justice (cases involving treason and criminal acts of high government officials); courts of appeal; wilaya (regional) courts (located at the headquarters of each of the 13 regions); commercial and labor courts; criminal courts; moughataa (district) courts; informal/customary courts

Political parties and leaders:
Alternative or El-Badil [Mohamed Yahdhi Ould MOCTAR HACEN]
Coalition of Majority Parties or CPM (parties supporting the regime including PRDR, UPR, RD, HATEM-PMUC, UCD)
Coordination of Democratic Opposition or COD (coalition of opposition political parties opposed to the government including APP, RFD, UFP, PNDD-ADIL, Alternative or El-Badil)
Democratic Renewal or RD [Moustapha Ould ABDEIDARRAHMANE]
Mauritanian Party for Unity and Change or HATEM-PMUC [Saleh Ould HANENA]
National Pact for Democracy and Development or PNDD-ADIL [Yahya Ould Ahmed El WAGHEF] (independents formerly supporting President Abdellahi)
National Rally for Freedom, Democracy and Equality or RNDLE
National Rally for Reform and Development or RNRD-TAWASSOUL [Mohamed Jamil MANSOUR] (moderate Islamists)
Popular Front or FP [Ch'bih Ould CHEIKH MALAINE]
Popular Progressive Alliance or APP [Messaoud Ould BOULKHEIR]
Rally of Democratic Forces or RFD [Ahmed Ould DADDAH]
Republican Party for Democracy and Renewal or PRDR [Mintata Mint HDEID]
Socialist and Democratic Unity Party or PUDS
Union for Democracy and Progress or UDP [Naha Mint MOUKNASS]

Union for the Republic or UPR

Union of Democratic Center or UCD [Cheikh Sid'Ahmed Ould BABA]

Union of the Forces for Progress or UFP [Mohamed Ould MAOULOUD]

Political pressure groups and leaders:

General Confederation of Mauritanian Workers or CGTM [Abdallahi Ould MOHAMED, secretary general]

Independent Confederation of Mauritanian Workers or CLTM [Samory Ould BEYE]

Mauritanian Workers Union or UTM [Mohamed Ely Ould BRAHIM, secretary general]

other: Arab nationalists; Ba'thists; Islamists

International organization participation:

ABEDA, ACP, AfDB, AFESD, AMF, AMU, AU, CAEU (candidate), EITI (compliant country), FAO, G-77, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICRM, IDA, IDB, IFAD, IFC, IFRCs, IHO (pending member), ILO, IMF, IMO, Interpol, IOC, IOM, IPU, ISO (correspondent), ITSO, ITU, ITUC (NGOs), LAS, MIGA, NAM, OIC, OIF, OPCW, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNWTO, UPU, WCO, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO

Diplomatic representation in the US:

chief of mission: Ambassador Mohamed Lemine El HAYCEN

chancery: 2129 Leroy Place NW, Washington, DC 20008

telephone: [1] (202) 232-5700 through 5701

FAX: [1] (202) 319-2623

Diplomatic representation from the US:

chief of mission: Ambassador Jo Ellen POWELL

embassy: 288 Rue Abdallaye, Rue 42-100 (between Presidency building and Spanish Embassy), Nouakchott

mailing address: BP 222, Nouakchott

telephone: [222] 4525-2660 through 2663

FAX: [222] 4525-1592

Flag description:

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; the gold color stands for the sands of the Sahara

National symbol(s):

star and crescent

National anthem:

name: "Hymne National de la Republique Islamique de Mauritanie" (National Anthem of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania)

 [PLAY ANTHEM](#)

lyrics/music: Baba Ould CHEIKH/traditional, arranged by Tolia NIKIPROWETZKY

note: adopted 1960; the unique rhythm of the Mauritanian anthem makes it particularly challenging to sing

Economy:: Mauritania

Economy - overview:

Half the population still depends on agriculture and livestock for a livelihood, even though many of the nomads and 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 nearly 40% of total exports. 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. Before 2000, drought and economic mismanagement resulted in a buildup of foreign debt. In February 2000, Mauritania qualified for debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative and nearly all of its foreign debt has since been forgiven. A new investment code approved in December 2001 improved the opportunities for direct foreign investment. Mauritania and the IMF agreed to a three-year Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) arrangement in 2006. Mauritania made satisfactory progress, but the IMF, World Bank, and other international actors suspended assistance and investment in Mauritania after the August 2008 coup. Since the presidential election in July 2009, donors have resumed assistance. Oil prospects, while initially promising, have largely failed to materialize, and the government has placed a priority on attracting private investment to spur economic growth. The government also emphasizes reduction of poverty, improvement of health and education, and privatization of the economy. Economic growth remained around 5% in 2010-12, mostly because of rising prices of gold, copper, iron ore, and oil.

GDP (purchasing power parity):

\$7.824 billion (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 157

\$7.356 billion (2011 est.)

\$7.082 billion (2010 est.)

note: data are in 2012 US dollars

GDP (official exchange rate):

\$4.199 billion (2012 est.)

GDP - real growth rate:

6.4% (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 38

3.9% (2011 est.)

5.1% (2010 est.)

GDP - per capita (PPP):
\$2,200 (2012 est.)
country comparison to the world: 190
\$2,100 (2011 est.)
\$2,000 (2010 est.)
<i>note:</i> data are in 2012 US dollars
Gross national saving:
17.1% of GDP (2012 est.)
country comparison to the world: 90
17.5% of GDP (2011 est.)
15.4% of GDP (2010 est.)
GDP - composition, by end use:
household consumption: 87.7%
government consumption: 16.9%
investment in fixed capital: 30.5%
investment in inventories: 0.1%
exports of goods and services: 68.6%
imports of goods and services: -103.9%
(2012 est.)
GDP - composition, by sector of origin:
agriculture: 14.9%
industry: 48%
services: 37.1% (2012 est.)
Agriculture - products:
dates, millet, sorghum, rice, corn; cattle, sheep
Industries:
fish processing, oil production, mining (iron ore, gold, and copper)
<i>note:</i> gypsum deposits have never been exploited
Industrial production growth rate:
9% (2012 est.)
country comparison to the world: 15
Labor force:
1.318 million (2007)
country comparison to the world: 134
Labor force - by occupation:
agriculture: 50%
industry: 10%
services: 40% (2001 est.)
Unemployment rate:
30% (2008 est.)
country comparison to the world: 182
20% (2004 est.)
Population below poverty line:
40% (2004 est.)
Household income or consumption by percentage share:
lowest 10%: 2.5%
highest 10%: 29.5% (2000)
Distribution of family income - Gini index:
39 (2000)
country comparison to the world: 67
37.3 (1995)
Budget:
revenues: \$1.143 billion
expenditures: \$1.263 billion (2012 est.)
Taxes and other revenues:
27.2% of GDP (2012 est.)
country comparison to the world: 110
Budget surplus (+) or deficit (-):

-2.9% of GDP (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 112

Fiscal year:

calendar year

Inflation rate (consumer prices):

6.5% (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 172

5.7% (2011 est.)

Central bank discount rate:

9% (31 December 2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 17

12% (31 December 2007)

Commercial bank prime lending rate:

17% (31 December 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 29

17% (31 December 2011 est.)

Stock of domestic credit:

\$1.723 billion (31 December 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 140

\$1.741 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

Market value of publicly traded shares:

\$NA

Current account balance:

-\$659.8 million (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 103

-\$549.4 million (2011 est.)

Exports:

\$2.66 billion (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 136

\$2.799 billion (2011 est.)

Exports - commodities:

iron ore, fish and fish products, gold, copper, petroleum

Exports - partners:

China 48.6%, Italy 7.5%, Japan 7%, Cote d'Ivoire 6.7%, France 4.7%, Spain 4.1% (2012)

Imports:

\$2.916 billion (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 146

\$2.656 billion (2011 est.)

Imports - commodities:

machinery and equipment, petroleum products, capital goods, foodstuffs, consumer goods

Imports - partners:

China 12.9%, Netherlands 10.5%, US 7.8%, France 7.7%, Brazil 5.6%, Germany 5.5%, Spain 5.1%, Belgium 4.7% (2012)

Debt - external:

\$2.897 billion (31 December 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 139

\$2.709 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

Exchange rates:

ouguiyas (MRO) per US dollar -

296.6 (2012 est.)

281.12 (2011 est.)

275.89 (2010 est.)

262.4 (2009)

238.2 (2008)

Energy:: Mauritania

Electricity - production:

474 million kWh (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 161

Electricity - consumption:

440.8 million kWh (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 169

Electricity - exports:

0 kWh (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 103

Electricity - imports:

0 kWh (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 213

Electricity - installed generating capacity:

253,000 kW (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 151

Electricity - from fossil fuels:

61.7% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 133

Electricity - from nuclear fuels:

0% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 140

Electricity - from hydroelectric plants:

38.3% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 58

Electricity - from other renewable sources:

0% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 159

Crude oil - production:

7,738 bbl/day (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: 82

Crude oil - exports:

10,000 bbl/day (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 58

Crude oil - imports:

0 bbl/day (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 97

Crude oil - proved reserves:

20 million bbl (1 January 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 85

Refined petroleum products - production:

0 bbl/day (2008 est.)

country comparison to the world: 207

Refined petroleum products - consumption:

18,120 bbl/day (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: 133

Refined petroleum products - exports:

0 bbl/day (2008 est.)

country comparison to the world: 202

Refined petroleum products - imports:

12,870 bbl/day (2008 est.)

country comparison to the world: 125

Natural gas - production:

0 cu m (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 167

Natural gas - consumption:

0 cu m (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 173

Natural gas - exports:

0 cu m (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 147

Natural gas - imports:

0 cu m (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 98

Natural gas - proved reserves:

28.32 billion cu m (1 January 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 71

Carbon dioxide emissions from consumption of energy:

2.89 million Mt (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 141

Communications:: Mauritania

Telephones - main lines in use:

72,300 (2011)

country comparison to the world: 157

Telephones - mobile cellular:

3.315 million (2011)

country comparison to the world: 122

Telephone system:

general assessment: limited system of cable and open-wire lines, minor microwave radio relay links, and radiotelephone communications stations; mobile-cellular services expanding rapidly

domestic: Mauritel, the national telecommunications company, was privatized in 2001 but remains the monopoly provider of fixed-line services; fixed-line teledensity 2 per 100 persons; mobile-cellular network coverage extends mainly to urban areas with a teledensity of roughly 100 per 100 persons; mostly cable and open-wire lines; a domestic satellite telecommunications system links Nouakchott with regional capitals

international: country code - 222; satellite earth stations - 3 (1 Intelsat - Atlantic Ocean, 2 Arabsat); fiber-optic and Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line (ADSL) cables for Internet access (2009)

Broadcast media:

broadcast media state-owned; 1 state-run TV and 1 state-run radio network; Television de Mauritanie, the state-run TV station, has an additional 6 regional TV stations that provide local programming (2008)

Internet country code:

.mr

Internet hosts:

22 (2012)

country comparison to the world: 220

Internet users:

75,000 (2009)

country comparison to the world: 170

Transportation:: Mauritania

Airports:

30 (2013)

country comparison to the world: 116

Airports - with paved runways:

total: 9

2,438 to 3,047 m: 5

1,524 to 2,437 m: 4 (2013)

Airports - with unpaved runways:

total: 21

2,438 to 3,047 m: 1

1,524 to 2,437 m: 10

914 to 1,523 m: 8

under 914 m:

2 (2013)

Railways:

728 km

standard gauge: 728 km 1.435-m gauge (2008)

Roadways:

total: 11,066 km
country comparison to the world: 133
paved: 2,966 km
unpaved: 8,100 km (2006)

Waterways:
(some navigation is possible on the Senegal River) (2011)

Ports and terminals:
Nouadhibou, Nouakchott

Military :: **Mauritania**

Military branches:
Mauritanian Armed Forces: Army, Mauritanian Navy (Marine Mauritanienne; includes naval infantry), Islamic Republic of Mauritania Air Group (Groupement Aerienne Islamique de Mauritanie, GAIM) (2013)

Military service age and obligation:
18 is the legal minimum age for voluntary military service; no conscription (2012)

Manpower available for military service:
males age 16-49: 718,713
females age 16-49: 804,622 (2010 est.)

Manpower fit for military service:
males age 16-49: 480,042
females age 16-49: 581,473 (2010 est.)

Manpower reaching militarily significant age annually:
male: 36,116
female: 36,826 (2010 est.)

Military expenditures:
5.5% of GDP (2006)
country comparison to the world: 13

Transnational Issues :: **Mauritania**

Disputes - international:
Mauritanian claims to Western Sahara remain dormant

Refugees and internally displaced persons:
refugees (country of origin): 26,000 (Western Saharan - Sahrawis) (2012); 69,676 (Mali) (2013)

Trafficking in persons:
current situation: Mauritania is a source, transit, and destination country for men, women, and children subjected to conditions of forced labor and sex trafficking; adults and children from traditional slave castes are subjected to slavery-related practices rooted in ancestral master-slave relationships; Mauritanian boys called talibe are trafficked within the country by religious teachers for forced begging; Mauritanian girls, as well as girls from Mali, Senegal, The 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
tier rating: Tier 3 - Mauritania does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and is not making significant efforts to do so; after the previous year's unprecedented progress in prosecuting and convicting trafficking offenders, the government has not convicted any traffickers; the government has not provided adequate protective services to victims or ensure their referral to NGOs, which provide the majority of care to trafficking victims and generally do not receive government financial support; the absence of measures in place to identify trafficking victims among vulnerable populations may have led to victims being punished for acts committed as a result of being trafficked; the effectiveness of the 2007 anti-slavery law remains impaired because the slaves, many of whom are illiterate, are first required to file a legal complaint, and the government provides no programs to assist victims in lodging slavery complaints (2013)