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Fragility in the Islamic Republic of Mauritania:  
Policy Brief for the European Development Fund

November 2018

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## Table of Contents

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2	Executive Summary
2	Methods
2	Background
3	Stakeholders
4	Fragility Risk Assessment
11	ALC Analysis
13	Scenarios
14	Policy Options
16	Annex 1: Definitions and Additional Readings
18	Annex 2: Further Detail on Internal Stakeholders
21	Annex 3: Further Detail on External Stakeholders
22	Annex 4: Additional Information and Analysis Regarding Clusters
24	Annex 5: Multidimensional Poverty in Mauritania
25	Annex 6: Fisheries production since 1960
26	Annex 7: Mauritania's Population Density
27	Annex 8: Migration routes affecting Mauritania
28	Annex 9: Fragility Ratings for Mauritania, overall and by ALC
29	Annex 10: Additional Information and Analysis Regarding Policy Options

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## Executive Summary

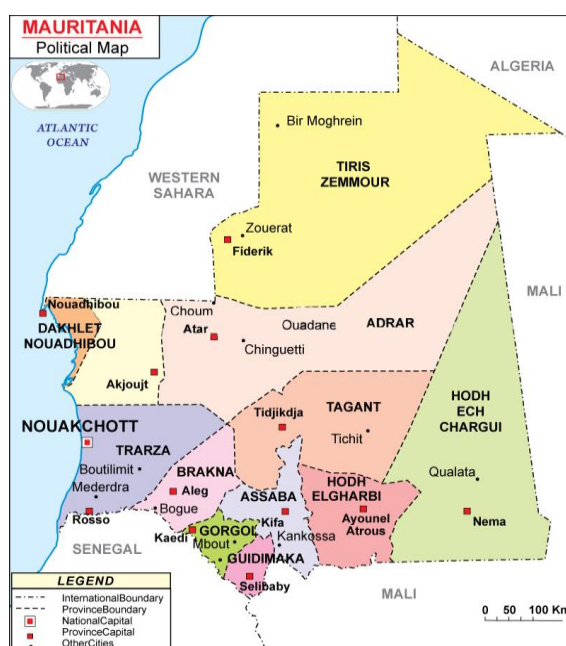
Mauritania is stuck in a capacity trap with horizontal inequalities across ethnic lines. The state's limited capacity to provide basic public services, coupled with persistent inequalities, undermine its legitimacy and authority. Ethnic bias persists in all spheres of life. Discrimination targets Afro-Mauritanians and Haratine, while Beydane dominate the political sphere and occupy most elite government and military positions. This report provides the European Development Fund (EDF) with an analysis of key drivers of fragility in Mauritania, proposing policy options to reduce the country's fragility in both the short- and long-term. Analysis focuses on trends and events relevant to the next six months (December 2018 to May 2019), within a longer-term context. Three policy recommendations are proposed for EDF to target drivers of fragility: supporting reforms for transparency in governance and election monitoring, supporting agricultural development in the poorest provinces of the country, and supporting justice system reforms.

## Methods

Both quantitative and qualitative data were drawn on in the preparation of this brief. Quantitative data included indicators from key sources such as the World Bank, various fragile states indices, and the United Nations Development Programme, allowing for trend analysis by looking at patterns over the past years and decades. Qualitative data drew on recent news articles, reports, and expert analyses, as well as scholarly literature related to fragile states. We chose diverse sources and types of data to provide a robust, nuanced analysis to the end user. As the shelf life of this brief is the next six months, we paid particular attention to recent and forecasted trends and events that might impact Mauritania's fragility over the coming months. This brief focuses on six clusters from Carleton University's Country Indicators for Foreign Policy (CIFP). Following analysis of indicators, intensity, and trends in each of these clusters, it was determined that the clusters of Governance and Political Stability, Human Development, and Environment and Sustainability were primary drivers of fragility in Mauritania, while the clusters of Security, Demography and Population, and Economic Development were secondary drivers. CIFP's Authority, Legitimacy, Capacity (ALC) model was then applied to our cluster analysis. Stakeholder, cluster, and ALC analyses were used to develop various scenarios for the next six months. This analysis fed into the development of three evidence-based policy recommendations, designed to address drivers of fragility and prevent the worst-case scenario from materializing. One shortcoming for this brief is an almost complete absence of reliable, current quantitative data disaggregated by ethnic group. This data would have permitted a more precise investigation of horizontal inequalities along ethnic lines to identify the most relevant areas of fragility and most important policy interventions.

## Background

The Islamic Republic of Mauritania is at a strategic geographic location between the Maghreb and West Africa. The country enjoys sub-regional influence and has established itself as a significant partner through its commitment to combating terrorism and its leadership in initiatives such as the Sahel G5. Regional cooperation has been focused on security in recent years, but drivers of insecurity across the region are mostly of a social, political, and economic nature. Mauritania has a tradition of military coups and military leadership. Ever since the first coup d'état in 1978, almost every leadership change occurred through a coup. The latest parliamentary elections were held in September 2018, with the ruling party, Union Pour la République (UPR), led by standing president Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, winning majority seats, while many<sup>1</sup> opposition leaders voiced concerns about vote fraud.<sup>2</sup> With the question of whether Aziz will seek an extra-constitutional third term looming, the 2019 Presidential Elections will be an important test for the state's commitment to democracy. Although Mauritania no longer ranks within the top 20 most fragile states (see Annex 9), it remains around the top 30 and has many persistent sources of vulnerability which require close monitoring.



# Stakeholders

## End user

This brief and its corresponding policy recommendations are directed at the European Development Fund (EDF), the European Union's (EU) main body for providing development aid. The EDF has a partnership with Mauritania, the Programme Indicatif National (PIN),<sup>3</sup> from 2014 until 2020 with a budget of \$195 million euros. The main goal of this program is to achieve stability and prosperity in Mauritania through sustainable development.<sup>4</sup> The EDF seeks to reinforce institutions and promote inclusive and tenable growth in Mauritania by working directly with the country's leaders and existing institutions. The program targets three sectors: food security, rule of law, and health. Given that only two years remain in the current program, it is imperative to highlight gaps and time-sensitive opportunities for the EDF so that they can prioritize high-impact policies that contribute to reducing Mauritania's fragility for the remainder of the current cooperation and in its next phase.

## Internal Stakeholders

Refer to Annex 2 for a classification of internal stakeholders by level of influence, as well as more detailed information on internal stakeholders.

**Presidential power:** **Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz** came to power in 2008 through a military coup, winning presidential elections a year later and winning re-election in 2014.<sup>5</sup> He maintains that he will not change the Constitution in order to run for another term, although doubts have been raised by opposition parties.<sup>6</sup> Potential successors include current Minister of Defence **Ould Ghazouani**, speaker of Parliament **Cheikh Ould Baya**, and presidential spokesperson and former party head **Sidi Mohamed Ould Maham**.<sup>7 8</sup>

**Opposition parties:** There are approximately 35 officially recognized political parties in Mauritania,<sup>9</sup> but they have limited influence on the political process.<sup>10</sup> Boycotts of past elections by some opposition parties have contributed to growing popularity of **Tewassoul**, an Islamist party accused of religiously-motivated radicalism.<sup>11</sup> Many of the other opposition parties are motivated by Mauritania's long-standing inequalities, calling for an end to the political, economic, and social marginalization and oppression of certain ethnic groups. Key opposition stakeholders include the **Front National pour la Démocratie et l'Unité (FNDU)** coalition<sup>12</sup> and the **Alliance Populaire Progressiste (APP)**, which garners support from both Haratine and Afro-Mauritanian ethnic groups.

**Official stakeholders linked with the state:** The **Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI)** oversees elections but has been accused by opposition parties of failing to ensure fair elections. The **judiciary** has limited independent influence; while it is guaranteed independence and autonomy in the Constitution, in practice it is heavily politically influenced. The **military** is an important national stakeholder. Since its first coup d'état in 1978, every President has been a military officer (except for a brief exception in 2007-2008). The military also plays a key role in counter-terrorism in the region.

**Civil society stakeholders:** Many **civil society stakeholders** are active in calling for equitable political participation, rights, and economic access for marginalized ethnic groups. However, their influence is limited as the authorities suppress dissent through harassment, torture, and jailing. Some of these stakeholders include: the **El Hor pressure group**,<sup>13</sup> **l'Initiative pour la Résurgence du Mouvement Abolitionniste (IRA)**,<sup>14</sup> and the **African Liberation Forces of Mauritania (FLAM)**.<sup>15</sup> The anti-slavery organization **SOS Esclaves** has had some success influencing anti-slavery decisions.<sup>16 17</sup> Important civil society stakeholders, motivated by Mauritania's deep inequalities, include **Biram Dah Abeid**,<sup>18</sup> **Fatimata Mbaye**, and **Oumar Ould Beibacar**.<sup>19</sup>

**Ethnic stakeholders:** Formal stakeholders are generally organized and underpinned by **informal networks and groups based on tribal and ethnic ties, as well as personal connections** built through village of origin, education, occupational and business experiences, and religious orientation (Sufi or Salafi).<sup>20</sup> Mauritania is composed of roughly 30% Arab-speaking **Beydane**, the ethnic elite also known as White Moors; 40% Arab-speaking **Haratine**, also known as Black Moors, many of whom are slaves or descendants of slaves; and 30% **Afro-Mauritanians**, belonging to sub-Saharan ethnic groups such as Fulani, Wolof, and Bambara.<sup>21</sup> Since the late 1980s, the state has tended to officially condemn tribal influence in state decision-making, all while using

tribal networks to control Mauritians and maintain dominance of a political elite.<sup>22</sup> **Elite Beydane tribes** are at the top of the hierarchical structure and at the core of political, social, and economic power.<sup>23</sup> President Aziz (who is Beydane) and these elite Beydane stakeholders find mutual benefit in Beydane being at the centre of power. While there is an **urban middle class**, including public servants and journalists, that is committed to working beyond tribal lines to achieve State building and rule of law, it is less influential than the wealthy, favoured Beydane elites.<sup>24</sup>

## External Stakeholders

Refer to Annex 3 for more detailed information on external stakeholders.

Despite the authoritarian nature of President Aziz's regime, **international governments and state bodies**, including France and the African Union, generally continue to collaborate with the Mauritanian government, prioritising security interests over democracy and human rights within the country.<sup>25 26</sup> Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), originally the Algerian Armed Islamic group, is a Salafi-Jihadist group which in recent years has operated primarily in Niger, Mauritania, and Mali. Until 2011, AQIM was active in Mauritania<sup>27</sup> but its activities have declined following anti-terrorism operations in the Sahel. Beyond security, external stakeholders from outside of Africa are linked to Mauritania through development aid, human rights concerns, and investment.<sup>28</sup> The largest donors of development aid to Mauritania are the Arab Fund, United Arab Emirates, International Development Association, EU Institutions (including the EDF), and France. International organizations such as the EDF, UNICEF, UNDP, and UNHCR support a wide range of interventions related to human development, humanitarian assistance, and migration in the country. **External stakeholders advocating for human rights** in Mauritania include governments,<sup>29</sup> international organizations,<sup>30</sup> and anti-slavery groups from the United States and Europe.<sup>31</sup> These stakeholders' ability to affect concrete change remains limited, although some surface-level decisions have recently been made. **Neighbouring states** such as Mali and Senegal are players in Mauritania primarily through security concerns, migration, and natural resource tensions.<sup>32 33 34 35</sup> **Foreign investors and companies** are also important external stakeholders in Mauritania, due to their influence on the country's economic development. While most investors were traditionally European, Chinese investors are increasingly interested external investors.<sup>36 37</sup>

## Fragility Risk Assessment

Refer to Annex 4 for additional information and analysis regarding clusters.

We present trends over the past ten years (since 2008) where available. Analysis of indicators, trends, and events highlight governance and political stability, human development, and environment and sustainability as primary drivers of fragility in Mauritania. The legend below shows the classifications of clusters by current impact on fragility and trend over the past ten years. Current impact on fragility is determined by quantitatively and qualitatively assessing the impact of the given cluster on fragility (intensity and reach of impact). Trend over the past ten years is determined by investigating quantitative indicators and events over this time period. We group clusters into primary and secondary drivers of fragility. Primary drivers comprise clusters with a high current impact on fragility or a moderate impact with a deteriorating trend. Secondary drivers comprise clusters with a moderate current impact on fragility and stable or improving trend or with a low current impact on fragility.

Legend			
Current impact on fragility	Low	Moderate	High
Trend over the past ten years	Improving ↑	Stable ⇒	Deteriorating ↓

## Primary Drivers of Fragility

Governance and Political Stability ↓	
Indicator	Value and Trend
<b>Government Effectiveness</b> World Bank WGI <sup>38</sup> *Estimate of governance, ranging from approximately -2.5 (weak) to 2.5 (strong) performance. Percentile rank is among all countries, ranging from 0 (lowest) to 100 (highest) rank	<b>-0.72, with a percentile rank of 22.6/100 (2017)</b> <i>Having deteriorated significantly from a peak percentile rank of 60 in 2003, the trend is stable, remaining at similar, relatively weak levels since 2008 (rank of 16 in 2008)</i>
<b>Transparency and Accountability</b> 2018 IIAG Index Report <sup>39</sup> *A standardised range of 0 - 100, where 100 is the best possible score.	<b>27.4/100 (2018)</b> <i>Small improvements over the last ten years, with increased improvements over past five years</i>
<b>Public Management</b> 2018 IIAG Index Report <sup>40</sup> *A standardised range of 0 - 100, where 100 is the best possible score.	<b>49.3/100 (2018)</b> <i>Improving overall in the past ten years but deteriorating since 2013</i>
<b>Corruption</b> Corruption Perceptions Index 2017 <sup>41</sup> *A score of 0 is highly corrupt, 100 very clean	<b>28/100, ranking 143/168 countries (2017)</b> <i>Stable (28/100 in 2008).</i>
<b>Public Services</b> Fragile State Index <sup>42</sup> * Worst score is 10, best score is 0	<b>8.8 (2018)</b> <i>Steady deterioration since 2008</i>
<b>Political Participation and Human Rights</b> 2018 IIAG Index Report <sup>43</sup> *A standardised range of 0 - 100, where 100 is the best possible score.	<b>36.5/100 (2018)</b> <i>Increasingly deteriorating since 2008</i>
<b>Rule of Law</b> 2018 IIAG Index Report <sup>44</sup> *A standardised range of 0 - 100, where 100 is the best possible score.	<b>37.2/100 (2018)</b> <i>Slight improvement overall since 2008, but deterioration in the last five years</i>
<b>Freedom of Expression</b> Freedom House Index 2018 <sup>45</sup> *An aggregate score of 0 is worst, 16 is best	<b>9/16 (2018)</b> <i>No clear trend due to change in methodology, but Mauritania was classified as 'partly free' in 2008 and declined to 'not free' in 2018.</i>

Despite the seemingly increased political will for development, the state's provision of basic services has deteriorated over recent years from already low levels. Mauritania ranks poorly on all governance indicators. Low population density over a large territory, centralized governance, and inadequate infrastructure limit rural and suburban access to public services.<sup>46</sup> Additionally, access to state services and executive positions<sup>47</sup> are in many cases dependent on ethnic identity or elite networks and clientalistic relationships.<sup>48</sup> Corruption and misappropriation of public funds remain endemic.<sup>49</sup> Documented corruption includes the embezzlement of development and aid funds from international donors,<sup>50</sup> bank loans, procurement contracts, fishing licenses, and acquisitions of land.<sup>51</sup> While there are signs that transparency is improving, Mauritania still performs significantly worse than neighbouring countries, scoring 27.4 as compared to the Maghreb average of 36.7 and Sahel-Saharan average of 34.2.<sup>52</sup> Its marginal improvements in transparency are also offset by deterioration in political participation, access to justice,<sup>53</sup> and human rights. This is magnified along ethnic lines, exemplified by Haratine having significantly lower success in accessing justice from both the courts and police.<sup>54</sup> With the increased imprisonment of activists, deplorable detention conditions, and use of torture,<sup>55</sup> civil society participation remains limited. Mauritania is a closed anocracy,<sup>56</sup> poorly institutionalized and heavily influenced by personalities. Although democratic processes arguably exist, Mauritania presents signs of a hybrid regime

with a large overlap between formal and informal institutions (see Annex 1). While Parliamentary elections in September 2018 were promising for their broad participation of opposition groups (who had boycotted the previous election),<sup>57</sup> the opposition has voiced concerns over electoral fraud<sup>1,58</sup>. The increasing risk of elite factionalism will be a troubling issue for UPR.<sup>59</sup> Finally, Mauritania's democratisation may be subject to the J-curve dilemma of inevitable instability and susceptibility for reversal<sup>60</sup> (see Annex 1). The upcoming Presidential elections, expected in early 2019, will be a test for the state's democratic and political will.

Human Development ↑	
Indicator	Value and Trend
<b>Prevalence of female genital mutilation</b> UNICEF <sup>61</sup>	<b>66.6% (2015)</b> <i>Trends unavailable</i>
<b>Under 5 mortality rate (per 1000 births)</b> The World Bank (1960-2017) <sup>62</sup>	<b>79 (2017)</b> <i>Steadily improving (103.1 in 2008)</i>
<b>Primary completion rate (percent of relevant population)</b> The World Bank (1976-2016) <sup>63</sup>	<b>59.3 (2016)</b> <i>Improving fairly consistently (54.6 in 2007, although some deterioration since 2013)</i>
<b>Human Development Index</b> UNDP (1990-2017) <sup>64</sup> *Measures long and healthy life, access to knowledge, and a decent standard of living. Score of 0 is worst, score of 1 is best.	<b>Ranked 159 out of 189, with a score of 0.52 (low human development) (2017)</b> <i>Steadily improving scores (0.48 in 2008), with above-average GNI per capita for its rank but below-average education</i>
<b>Prevalence of undernourishment (% of population)</b> World Bank (2000 - 2016) <sup>65</sup>	<b>11.3 (2016)</b> <i>Inconsistent (9.3 in 2008, 7.2 in 2014)</i>
<b>People using at least basic sanitation services (% of population)</b> The World Bank (2000-2015) <sup>66</sup>	<b>44.6 (2015)</b> <i>Consistent improvements (34.5 in 2008)</i>

Low levels of human development in Mauritania can be traced to low state capacity, with the state unable to provide its people with services that contribute to a decent quality of life. These capacity gaps, in part, are due to a history of resource and revenue mismanagement. Overall, human development is improving in Mauritania but compared to the rest of the world it still performs poorly, ranking 159 out of 189 countries on the HDI.<sup>67</sup> Despite low levels of extreme poverty compared to most other African countries, rapid population growth and urbanization contribute to state failure to provide adequate services. Food insecurity persists<sup>68</sup> and undernourishment has been deteriorating with no signs of immediate improvement.<sup>69</sup> Indeed, state capacity and basic services are so poor that some Mauritians choose to live in the large, internationally-funded refugee camp for Malians to have better access to water, schools, and healthcare.<sup>70</sup> There are stark inequalities in human development. For example, Mauritania performs extremely poorly in terms of gender compared to other African countries, ranking 47th out of 54 states.<sup>71</sup> Female genital mutilation and underage marriage are significant problems for girls in Mauritania.<sup>72</sup> There are also no substantial laws in place to protect women from marital rape, sexual assault, or domestic violence.<sup>73</sup> Human development is also unequal across ethnic lines. While no quantitative data exists to measure this ethnic inequality, multidimensional poverty is concentrated in areas where Haratine and Afro-Mauritians are most prominent (see Annex 5 for map of multidimensional poverty<sup>74</sup>) and activists consistently draw attention to the plight of underserved ethnicities. Women and marginalized ethnic groups also face barriers to property ownership. Formal public policies towards marginalized ethnic groups are mostly neutral or positive, however even positive policy is insufficient to “offset

<sup>1</sup> In the September 2018 election, opposition parties accused CENI of failing to ensure fair elections, with manipulation and mix-ups around voter lists and moved polling stations, although CENI maintained that the elections had proceeded normally, albeit with a few technical problems. In mid-2018, FNDU submitted a request to the Supreme Court that CENI be dissolved, but the verdict has not yet been reached.



active and widespread discrimination.”<sup>75</sup> For Haratine the situation is often worse as formal policies exclude and repress their rights and participation.

Environment and Sustainability ↓	
Indicator	Value and Trend
<b>Climate Risk Index</b> GermanWatch (1996-2017) <sup>76</sup> *Extent to which countries have been affected by the impacts of weather-related loss events, including storms, floods, and heat waves. Low levels are worst (worst score globally is 11.3, best is 175.3)	<b>79.2 (1996-2015) - ranked 83/181 worst in the world and 10th worst in Africa</b> <i>No available data on trends.</i>
<b>Monthly Temperatures</b> World Bank Climate Change Knowledge Portal <sup>77</sup>	<b>Temperatures generally range between 20-35°C</b> <i>Trends predict rising average monthly temperatures (projected 0.5-2°C increase by 2040, 3-8°C by 2099).</i>
<b>Monthly Rainfall</b> World Bank Climate Change Knowledge Portal <sup>78</sup>	<b>9 mm per month, with large variations by region and season</b> <i>Due to climate change, rainfall is projected to vary enormously in the future, with possible high reductions or increases during the rainy season.</i>
<b>Environmental Performance Index</b> Yale Center for Environmental Law & Policy <sup>79 80</sup> *Ranks performance on protection of human health and protection of ecosystems. Top country in 2018 scored 87, worst scored 27.	<b>Ranked 166 out of 180, with a score of 39 (2018)</b> <i>No clear trend (ranked 146 out of 149 in 2008, with a score of 44.2; ranked 165 out of 178 in 2014, with a score of 27)</i>
<b>Renewable internal freshwater resources per capita (cubic metres)</b> World Bank (1960-2017) <sup>81</sup>	<b>98 (2014)</b> <i>Steadily deteriorating (around 115 in 2008)</i>
<b>Agricultural Land (% of land area)</b> World Bank (1960-2017) <sup>82</sup> *Includes grazing land	<b>39% (2015)</b> <i>Stable (38.5% in 2008).</i>
<b>Forest Area (% of land area)</b> World Bank (1960-2017) <sup>83</sup>	<b>0.2% (2014)</b> <i>Slowly but steadily deteriorating (0.24% in 2008)</i>
<b>Capture fisheries production (metric tons)</b> World Bank (1960-2017) <sup>84</sup>	<b>609,754 (2016)</b> <i>Rapidly increasing, with concerns of overexploitation (195,328 in 2008) and currently at an historical record high (see Annex 6 for a graph on trends since 1960)</i>

Mauritania has a warm, arid desert climate with scarce water resources.<sup>85</sup> Rainfall is highly variable across the country.<sup>86</sup> Mauritania's population is highly reliant on natural resources for livelihoods, with over 75% of those employed working in agriculture, growing crops such as millet, sorghum, and maize and herding livestock. Mauritania's environment is fragile, facing the slow-moving, compounded impacts of climate change, droughts, scarce natural resources, rising human population, and overexploitation and degradation of natural resources. Over the next century, Mauritania is forecasted to suffer negative impacts from climate change, including increased temperatures and higher variability of precipitation. Mauritania already experiences recurrent drought, flooding, and environmental degradation. Several severe droughts over the past 30 years have limited agricultural production,<sup>87</sup> with droughts in 2010 and 2011 affecting over 1 million people respectively<sup>88</sup> and contributing to a food crisis by January 2012.<sup>89</sup> Droughts put pressure on already limited food and water resources, resulting in food insecurity and even violence in some cases.<sup>90</sup> Climate projections predict increased annual probability of severe droughts over this century.<sup>91</sup> Coastal populations, many of which rely on fishing as a source of income, are vulnerable to sea level rise due to climate change; this may result in flooding, coastal



erosion, displaced populations, and salinization of groundwater near the coast.<sup>92</sup> Agriculture and pastoralism have already both declined, in part due to increasingly uncertain environmental conditions.<sup>93</sup> There is competition over scarce natural resources in the country. Access to land for women is extremely rare and land tends to be attributed more to Beydane than marginalized ethnic groups.<sup>94</sup> Agricultural and pastoral activities are also increasingly in competition. Scarce natural resources are also often subject to overexploitation and degradation.<sup>95</sup> The state has adopted some laws and policies around environment since 2000; much of its response focuses on humanitarian intervention (e.g. food distribution) at times of crisis but there has been work to increase environmental resilience.<sup>96</sup> This legislation does not, however, appear to be having a concrete impact on trends of environmental deterioration, likely due to weak governance and deteriorating rule of law and government effectiveness.

## Secondary Drivers of Fragility

Security ⇒	
Indicator	Value and Trend
<b>Security Apparatus</b> Fragile State Index <sup>97</sup> * Maximum score of 10 is worst	<b>6.6 (2018)</b> <i>Improving (7.2 in 2008)</i>
<b>National Security</b> 2018 IIAG Index Report <sup>98</sup> *A standardised range of 0 - 100, where 100 is the best possible score.	<b>80.3/100 (2018)</b> <i>Improving overall in last ten years (79.08 in 2008), but deteriorating since 2013</i>
<b>Personal Safety</b> 2018 IIAG Index Report <sup>99</sup> *A standardised range of 0 - 100, where 100 is the best possible score.	<b>39.9/100 (2018)</b> <i>Deteriorating slightly overall in last ten years (39.98 in 2008), but improving since 2013</i>
<b>Electoral Violence</b> Electoral Violence Prediction Market (EVP) Integrated Country Summary Forecasts 2018 <sup>100</sup>  CGAI Study 2018-2019 <sup>101</sup>	The EVP forecasts moderate risk elections with a 40% fatalities-based probability. An expert comment is that there could be intimidation and harassment of candidates and their supporters.  CGAI ranks the 2018 National Assembly elections as the 16th highest risk elections out of a total of 20 elections in 2018/2019.
<b>Political Violence</b> ACLED <sup>102</sup>	Low levels of political violence compared to the region. A continued trend of political protests is observed from 2011-2018. Protests have represented more than 90% of all recorded political activity in the country and are frequently met with violence from state security forces.

Mauritania shares the largest border with Mali and is subject to cross-border terrorism. The state has succeeded in curtailing terrorist activities of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and spill overs from neighbouring countries. This improvement is largely owing to the upsurge of foreign aid funding for security and the G5's counterterrorism initiative<sup>2</sup>. Donors include USAID,<sup>103</sup> the EU<sup>104</sup> and EU-AU Cooperative efforts,<sup>105</sup> Saudi Arabia,<sup>106</sup> and NATO.<sup>107</sup> The government has increased its total expenditure on security, to a high of 11% of GDP in 2017. A potential source of fragility for Mauritania is its reliance on foreign aid for security. Additionally, the international community risks strengthening Aziz through its unqualified support for his role in fighting terrorism in the region. Aziz has managed to avoid ripples of the 2011 Arab uprisings reaching

<sup>2</sup> The G5 Sahel joint force, first formed in Nouakchott, Mauritania and authorised by the African Union Peace and Security Council and the UNSC Resolution 2359, is a regional counterterrorism framework between Mali, Mauritania, Chad, Niger and Burkina Faso. Mauritania has led an active role in this Alliance, with the Mauritanian General Hanena Ould Sidi being its first leader and the inauguration of the G5 Security Cooperation Platform and Defence College in Nouakchott.

Mauritania but has increased repression using the police and security forces.<sup>108</sup> Arrests and violence rose ahead of the 2018 elections.<sup>109</sup> A potential concern for the state is the risk of electoral violence in the upcoming Presidential elections.<sup>110</sup>

Demography and Population ⇒	
Indicator	Value and Trend
<b>Population, total</b> United Nations Development Programme (1990-2017) <sup>111</sup>	<b>4.4 million (2017)</b> <i>Steadily increasing (3.4 million in 2008)</i>
<b>Fertility rate (births/woman)</b> World Bank (1960-2017) <sup>112</sup>	<b>4.7 (2017)</b> <i>Steadily decreasing (5.1 in 2008)</i>
<b>Population ages 0-14 (% of total)</b> World Bank (1960-2017) <sup>113</sup>	<b>40% (2017)</b> <i>Steadily, but slowly, decreasing (42% in 2008)</i>
<b>Population, urban (%)</b> United Nations Development Programme (1990-2017) <sup>114</sup>	<b>53% (2017)</b> <i>Steadily increasing (45% in 2008)</i>
<b>Refugee population living in Mauritania</b> World Bank (1960-2017) <sup>115</sup>	<b>77,400 (2017)</b> <i>Increasing quickly over past 10 years (27,041 in 2008). Stable but high since 2014</i>
<b>Estimated Proportion Living in Modern Slavery (victims per 1000)</b> Global Slavery Index <sup>116</sup>	<b>21.4 (2018)</b> <i>No available data on trends.</i>

Mauritania is composed of roughly 40% Arab-speaking Haratine, 30% Arab-speaking Beydane, and 30% sub-Saharan Mauritians, speaking a variety of languages including Pulaar, Bambara, and Wolof.<sup>117</sup> Mauritania's fertility rate and youth bulge are high but decreasing, putting increasing strain on limited natural resources and already high unemployment rates. In 2017, Mauritania approved its first ever reproductive health/family planning law,<sup>118</sup> which may contribute to further reductions in fertility rates. Women are increasingly educated but remain less highly educated than men and subject to discriminatory laws. With growing urbanization, roughly half of the Mauritanian population lives in or around the capital, with significant populations also living in the south (see Annex 7). The high current refugee population is mostly composed of Malian refugees.<sup>119</sup> Mauritania is along a migration route in West Africa, with migrants from countries such as Senegal passing through on their way to Morocco and Europe<sup>120</sup> (see Annex 8). Reliable data on modern slavery is difficult to obtain,<sup>121 122</sup> but Mauritania has one of the highest rates of slavery in the world, likely ranking within the top ten worst countries.<sup>123</sup> Government response to the issue has been extremely poor, with legislation being almost completely ineffective in bringing slaveholders to account and obtaining justice for slaves, due to lack of political willpower, a judiciary highly influenced by the executive, strong influence of Beydane (who are the slaveholders in the country), and general government ineffectiveness.<sup>124 125 126 127</sup>

Economic Development ↑	
Indicator	Current Value
<b>GDP per capita (constant 2010 \$US)</b> The World Bank Indicators <sup>128</sup>	<b>1305.21 (2017)</b> <i>Increased steadily from 1229.45 in 2008 to 1326.16 in 2014, but has slightly deteriorated since</i>
<b>Unemployment (% of total labor force, modeled ILO estimate)</b> The World Bank Indicators <sup>129</sup>	<b>9.9 (2017)</b> <i>Very small but consistent improvements (10.2 in 2008 and 10.1 in 2012)</i>



<b>Access to electricity (% of population)</b> The World Bank Indicators <sup>130</sup>	<b>41.65 (2016)</b> <i>Constant and significant improvements (30 in 2008, 35.62 in 2012)</i>
<b>Foreign direct investment (FDI) (% of GDP)</b> The World Bank Indicators <sup>131</sup>	<b>11.71 (2017)</b> <i>Extreme fluctuations with signs of overall improvements over last ten years (8.62 in 2008, 26.53 in 2012)</i>
<b>Ratio of female to male labor force participation rate (%) (modeled ILO estimate)</b> The World Bank Indicators <sup>132</sup>	<b>45.78 (2017)</b> <i>Small but consistent improvements over last ten years (43.18 in 2008, 44.63 in 2012)</i>

Overall, Mauritania is on track to continue modest economic growth thanks to a stabilization of global commodity prices and efforts to decrease corruption and increase foreign direct investment. Mauritania's main economic issues stem from mismanagement of extractive resources by the state, corruption within the public sector that hinders private sector development, and inequality of economic opportunities between ethnic groups. The inability of the state to create any consistent economic growth means that Mauritania faces shortages of infrastructure, institutional capacity, and human capital, which has negative effects on state service provision (see Annex 4). Mauritania has a highly undiversified economy relying heavily on extractive commodities and thus beholden to global commodity prices. 75% of the state's revenue comes from oil, mining, and fisheries,<sup>133</sup> however these sectors only provide 3% of jobs.<sup>134</sup> Indeed, Mauritania has relatively worrisome unemployment, in the worst one-third for Africa with a projected deterioration of 13% by 2021.<sup>135</sup> As agricultural land becomes scarce for the growing population, employment in agriculture as a percentage of total employment is falling, although it remains high at almost 76% in 2017.<sup>136</sup> Women comprise most of the agricultural sector workforce but have made very minimal gains in terms of overall labour force participation<sup>137</sup> (see Annex 4). The state has been trying to increase foreign direct investment, especially in the extractive sector and fisheries, by passing laws to make it easier to do business in the country.<sup>138</sup> While FDI levels are generally increasing, bureaucratic red-tape and judicial corruption still make it difficult for outside entities to hold long term contracts and create lasting employment opportunities.<sup>139</sup> Economic divisions exist between the major ethnic groups, with Beydane being better represented in the upper strata of the socioeconomic ladder. While Mauritania performs relatively well on the Gini coefficient (fifth best in Africa), this does not take into consideration severe horizontal economic inequalities between ethnic groups.<sup>140</sup>

## ALC Analysis

Using the Country Indicators for Foreign Policy (CIFP) and drawing on the cluster analysis, we investigate authority, legitimacy, and capacity (ALC) in Mauritania to identify weak dimensions contributing to fragility.<sup>141</sup> The dates of 2006, 2012, and 2017 are used to track recent CIFP ratings as these are the most recent reports where ratings disaggregated by ALC are available for Mauritania. This date range also provides a glimpse of evolutions in ALC over the past decade.

	Authority	Legitimacy	Capacity
<b>Definition</b> <sup>142</sup>	“Extent to which a state possesses the ability to enact binding legislation over its population, control its territory and provide core public goods and security to its population”	“Extent to which a particular government commands public loyalty to the governing regime and domestic support for its legislation and policy”	“Ability of the state to mobilize and use resources for productive ends”
<b>Examples of indicators</b> <sup>143</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conflict intensity</li> <li>Government effectiveness</li> <li>Political stability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level of democracy</li> <li>Voice and accountability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GDP per capita</li> <li>Education</li> <li>Life expectancy</li> </ul>

<b>Recent CIFP ratings</b> <sup>144 145 146</sup> *Higher scores are worse (best score is 1, worst is 9)	7.03 (2017 report) <sup>147</sup>	5.59 (2017 report)	6.25 (2017 report)
	5.42 (2012 report)	6.38 (2012 report)	6.90 (2012 report)
	5.08 (2006 report)	5.86 (2006 report)	6.38 (2006 report)

**Authority:** Government effectiveness is weak<sup>148</sup> and rule of law is weak and deteriorating over the past five years.<sup>149</sup> Violent crime remains relatively high and persistent, but the state has a growing monopoly on violence and has maintained an absence of war.<sup>150</sup> While the state has been effective at preventing insecurity spill-overs from Mali and curtailing terrorist activities, the state is not strong in providing core public goods to its population. While revenues from extractive industries are high, they are mismanaged by the state, with corruption, patronage, and unequal economic opportunities between ethnic groups. Every leadership change has occurred through a coup d'état; the upcoming presidential elections in 2019 will be a telling moment for the future of the state. These elections have been classified as “moderate risk” in terms of electoral violence.<sup>151</sup> Marginalized ethnic groups present a number of risk factors for rebellion, including underrepresentation in positions of power, persistent protest, and government repression. However, conflict intensity remains low with no signs of upcoming spikes over the next six months.

**Legitimacy:** The state seems to be showing early signs of falling into a legitimacy trap;<sup>152</sup> legitimacy is relatively weak due to expanding inequalities and authoritarian management (see Annex 1). The state scores poorly on voice and accountability<sup>153</sup> and participation and human rights are weak and continuing to deteriorate.<sup>154</sup> Corruption remains high.<sup>155</sup> The current government commands public loyalty from elites (i.e. Beydane), but not from Haratine or Afro-Mauritanians, who compose the majority of the country's population. Opposition parties have boycotted elections in the past and marginalized ethnic groups mistrust the state. Citizens have limited scope to articulate their expectations and may face reprisals for expressing critical views on social media. Governmental approval is required, and usually denied, for large gatherings and the state cracks down on dissent. Citizen-state relations are likely to remain weak and volatile over the next six months.

**Capacity:** The country appears to be stuck in a capacity trap with horizontal inequalities along ethnic lines<sup>156</sup> (see Annex 1 for further reading). The Mauritanian state has a poor ability to mobilize and use resources for productive ends. State capacity to provide basic services is hindered by a low population density over a large territory. GDP per capita is slowly improving, as is overall performance on the human development index. However, public services on the whole are poor and worsening.<sup>157</sup> The primary education completion rate has dropped in recent years, undernourishment has intensified, and child mortality levels and poor access to clean water indicate substantive state deficiencies.<sup>158</sup> Rural areas where Beydane are less present are particularly poorly served. Social contract theory posits that the need for a state that provides public goods naturally arises and societies thus establish a protection specialist.<sup>159</sup> Failure to provide public goods and services risks poor state-society relations. Forecasts for 2018/2019 indicate a risk of renewed social unrest, with citizens calling into question the legitimacy of the state in the context of persistent poverty, unemployment, and inequalities.<sup>160</sup>

## Scenarios

### Baseline scenario (most likely) over next six months (December 2018-May 2019):

President Aziz honours his promise to step down, but in early 2019 appoints a successor who is closely tied to the current regime, initiating a Putin-Medvedev scenario. The successor wins the 2019 presidential elections, amidst the same allegations of fraud/rigging seen in the 2018 parliamentary elections. Low levels of protest by ethnic minorities continue, as does state repression through crackdown and jailing of activists. The situation remains stable at poor levels but risks deteriorating as Mauritanians become increasingly disenchanted by the state and sense no improvements from their new leader. Refugee flows from Mali continue steadily, with an uptick around the upcoming Malian election. Tensions over natural resources, especially in rural areas, persist, fueled by environmental degradation and stresses, food shortages, and poverty. Iron ore prices continue their modest improvement, but while revenues increase, the state still fails to meet the needs of the population. Increases in FDI expand the extractive sector but still do not create many employment opportunities for locals.



### **Worst-case scenario over next six months (December 2018-May 2019):**

Poverty, unemployment, and unequal growth persist and low state capacity continues to undermine marginalized populations' confidence in the state. President Aziz amends the constitution to run for a third term. Consistent with the EIU forecast, this is met by renewed social unrest and political repression. Galvanized by the upcoming election, movements led by Haratine and Afro-Mauritanians unite and organize large protests, led by key activists and opposition politicians such as Samory Ould Bèye (El Hor) and Messaoud Ould Belkheir (APP). Aziz's government cracks down harshly, killing some protesters in attempts to disperse the movement by force. Many are sent to jail indefinitely, spurring further protests and a boycott of the upcoming elections. Already fragile security and rights deteriorate and the low-capacity armed forces fail to control the situation. Previously improving levels of FDI plummet as companies fear that instability will affect their businesses.

### **Best-case scenario over next six months (December 2018-May 2019):**

Aware that his party cannot win the 2019 election without more support from marginalized ethnic groups, President Aziz decides to take meaningful action in response to activists, the international community, and opposition politicians. The state frees Ould Abeid, along with many other jailed activists. They then start a meaningful pre-election dialogue, aiming to make wide-reaching changes to eliminate slavery and create a more equitable Mauritanian society free from ethnic marginalization. The UNDP and African Union jointly facilitate the dialogue. Civil society feels increasingly able to dialogue with the executive and protests halt. As part of IMF strategy, plans to liberalize the economy, reduce corruption, and create employment opportunities for locals outside of elite groups are also implemented, encouraging more businesses to engage in the economy and creating jobs in the formal sector. FDI rates, especially in the extractive sector, continue to rise. The election in Mali, planned for April 2019, goes smoothly, with no significant uptick in conflict. Numbers of new refugees lessen, preventing increasing pressure on natural resources and potential for conflict.

### **Wildcard scenarios over next six months (December 2018-May 2019):**

Environment: A drought occurs, with its effects exacerbated by continued environmental degradation. Already high levels of poverty and food insecurity skyrocket, notably in the agricultural south of the country, as does conflict around scarce natural resources.

Neighbourhood: The situation in Mali unexpectedly deteriorates dramatically. Many more refugees flee for Mauritania. Already fragile refugee-Mauritanian relationships deteriorate.

Global markets: Prices of imports (e.g. food and fuel) or exports (e.g. iron ore) plummet or soar, having large effects on inflation, economic well-being, and food security in the undiversified Mauritanian economy.

## **Policy options**

Policy options are designed to fit within the priorities of the end user and address short and longer-term threats to fragility in Mauritania, with a focus on primary drivers of fragility. Their goal is to increase the chances of the best-case scenario and avoid the worst-case scenario. Given the state's low capacity and consequentially frail legitimacy amongst marginalized ethnic groups, these policy options aim to address the identified drivers of fragility and in turn strengthen the social contract as a precursor to achieving other outcomes important to reducing long-term fragility in the country. Policy options are in order of feasibility for the end user and relevance, taking into account levels of risk. Note: Additional information and analysis regarding each policy option can be found in Annex 10.

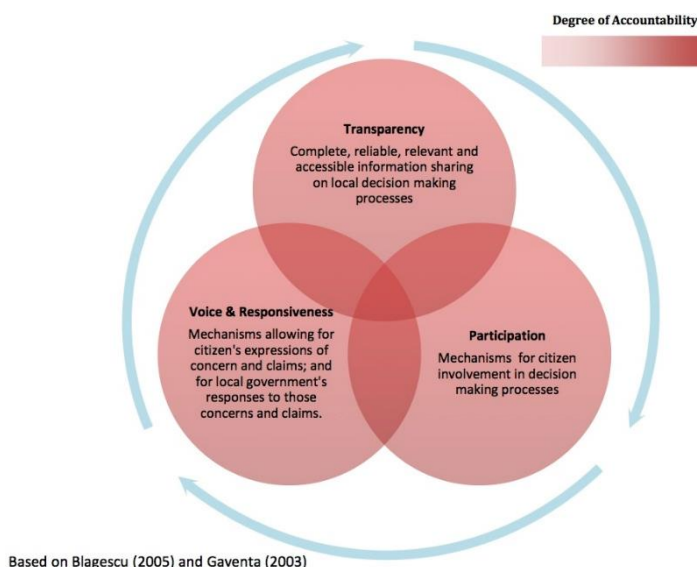
### **Option 1: Promote Transparency in Governance and Political Processes**

**Policy:** EDF could build state capacity to achieve greater transparency which would address impediments to efficient governance and in turn foster improved state-society relations. Policy could focus on two key areas: support of legal and regulatory reforms that strengthen the government's communication capacity to foster reliable and accessible information sharing, and election monitoring. Activities could comprise training and assistance to the state, drawing from the World Bank's evaluation framework for the Communication for

Governance and Accountability Program (CommGAP).<sup>161</sup> EDF could support the international community in election monitoring, working with the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) in the upcoming 2019 Presidential elections to ensure a free and transparent electoral process (see Annex 10).

**Cluster/ALC:** Governance and Political Stability, Human Development; Legitimacy, Capacity

**Relevance:** A lack of transparency and endemic corruption are major obstacles to efficient governance and delivering basic public service across the country, which in turn also affects human development in the country. Election monitoring is especially relevant following concerns around the legitimacy of the September 2018 election<sup>162</sup> and the moderate risk of electoral violence;<sup>163</sup> monitoring could enhance the legitimacy of the elected government. The policy option is relevant to the EDF as it is line with the PIN objective to increase professionalism in the public service. Transparency, accountability and stakeholder participation are also the cornerstones of the Open Government principles<sup>164</sup> of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).



**Risks:** Embezzlement of international aid funds is common.<sup>165</sup> Meticulous monitoring and evaluation of EDF projects, in addition to conditional performance grants, can ensure they contribute effectively to achieving principles of good governance. There is also a risk of isomorphic mimicry,<sup>166</sup> with the state pretending to become more transparent, all while maintaining corruption and barriers to dissent.

**Access Points:** The EDF should work with the Mauritanian government under the commitments of the Strategic Framework for the Fight against Poverty (CSLP), notably Axis 4 (“improve governance and increase capacities,” especially concerning the fight against corruption).<sup>167</sup> The EDF should also partner with CENI, which oversees the country’s elections.

**Measuring Results:** The CommGAP Evaluation Framework provides a useful means of measurement for communication project objectives and outcomes.<sup>168</sup> Implementing higher levels of project monitoring and evaluation can combat corrupt practices and enable learning from past shortcomings.

Desired Outcome	Measurement	Method of Verification
Enhanced governmental communication capacity and information sharing	-CommGAP Evaluation Framework -Access to public & legislative information and records -Increased accountability of public servants	Baseline data collection, where relevant, with monitoring data collected annually and final evaluation conducted at the end of programming
Free and fair Presidential elections and a viable social contract between representative and constituencies	-Opposition parties, Tewassoul, and FNDU accept election results as fair and representative of the Mauritanian people -Independent election monitors confirm that elections were free and fair	Surveys, interviews, and news monitoring directly following 2019 Presidential elections



**Option 2:** Work with the Ministry of Agriculture and local stakeholders to increase the use of sustainable, resilient, and efficient agricultural practices and improve food security in the poorest provinces.

**Policy:** EDF could finance the development of programming in concert with the Ministry of Agriculture and local stakeholders to increase the use of environmentally sustainable, shock-resilient, and high productivity agricultural practices and to improve food security in the provinces of Gorgol, Guidimaka, Assaba, Hodh El Gharbi, and Hodh Ech Chargui. Local stakeholders should represent low-income farmers, herders, and households, and might include village associations or rural councils, with attention paid to the representation of Haratine and Afro-Mauritanians, as well as women, as these are marginalized stakeholders who are heavily involved in agriculture. The programming should be led strategically and during implementation by the Ministry of Agriculture, with strong partnerships with local stakeholders, to increase the legitimacy of the government and enable it to exercise leadership when vulnerable rural populations are faced with droughts and food insecurity.

**Cluster/ALC targets:** Economic development, Human development, Environment and Sustainability, and Governance; Capacity, Legitimacy, and Authority.

**Relevance:** This policy option aims to reduce underlying drivers of fragility by improving low state capacity that continues to undermine marginalized populations' confidence in the state. It is highly relevant for Mauritania, due to the performance and importance of agriculture in the country,<sup>169 170</sup> high poverty in rural areas,<sup>171</sup> and its alignment with the Ministry of Agriculture's strategic objectives.<sup>172</sup> This policy option is also highly relevant for EDF, due to its close alignment with EDF's Programme Indicatif National 2014-2020 (PIN)<sup>173</sup> and the New Deal, which the European Union has endorsed.<sup>174 175</sup>

**Access points, partners, and stakeholders:** The Ministry of Agriculture already has a number of initiatives underway that could serve as access points, inform partner and stakeholder selection, and complement this policy. Potential secondary partners in government include the Ministry of Environment and Rural Development and Ministry of Livestock. Following conversations with state-level partners and stakeholders, EDF should support the Ministry of Agriculture to begin dialogue with local stakeholders, such as village associations and rural councils. Synergies and potential access points exist around other AGIR-Sahel initiatives in Mauritania, such as the National Programme for Social Protection (PNPS), and with the Programme Accord de Partenariat Économique pour le Développement (PAPED).<sup>176</sup>

**Risks:** Government effectiveness is low, which could compromise the ability of the Ministry of Agriculture to lead this initiative. Persistent calls for land reform and mistrust of the state government by marginalized, underserved rural populations may derail consensus on program activities between national and local stakeholders. Another risk is that the truly vulnerable may not be well-represented by local stakeholders, who may be individuals in positions of relative power or wealth, tempted to appropriate funds and direct the program according to their best interests.

**Measuring results:** Success, which can be motivated by results-based financing, will be measured by progress on a number of key indicators, some of which are already outlined in PIN. Much of these results can be informed by existing data collection, including existing surveys and censuses outlined in Annexe 3 of PIN.<sup>177</sup> The concept of "poor households" should be defined by local stakeholders, and will likely involve some measure of income, wealth, and resilience. Results measurement is outlined in the below table:

Desired Outcome	Measurement	Method of Verification
Improved trust and confidence of local populations in the ministry and state	-Trust/confidence levels (e.g. on a Likert scale) of local populations towards the Ministry of Agriculture and the state more generally (disaggregated by gender, age, ethnicity, and political affiliation, if possible)	Baseline data collection, where relevant,
Improved technical capacity of low-income farmers and	-Number of attendees from poor households at trainings (disaggregated by sex and type of agricultural practice)	

herders on key sustainable and efficient agricultural practices	-Percentage of poor agricultural households using improved practices (disaggregated by type of agricultural practice, ethnicity of household)	with monitoring data collected annually and final evaluation conducted at the end of programming
Improved and sustainable irrigation infrastructure in provinces of focus	-Number and placement (geographically) of new irrigation systems established for poor households -Percentage of poor agricultural households using irrigation infrastructure	
Increased food security	-Under-five malnutrition rates (height-for-age) in poor households -Rate of access by poor households to healthy, sufficient, and diversified food over the year	

**Option 3: Work with the Minister of Justice and civil society groups to reform the justice system, making equitable justice proceedings accessible for all and upholding the rule of law.**

**Policy:** In line with the EDF's Programme Indicatif National for Mauritania, the EDF could undertake significant justice sector reforms to allow access to fair, non-partisan justice for all gender identities and ethnic minorities as well as for corporations and foreign governments seeking economic contracts. This justice reform should include training sessions, evaluation of presidential powers, and more focus on systemically marginalized ethnic groups.

A joint partnership signed in July 2018 in line with the PIN, Le Projet d'Appui à la Réforme de la Justice (PARJ),” promised \$12.6 million Euros to help support reform of the justice sector by allowing the justice and penal systems to reinforce protection for human rights, in particular those citizens that are the most vulnerable. In-depth training sessions for all justice sector employees, accompanied by third-party evaluations of court decisions to assure transparency and to expose corruption, could be part of this policy. A thorough evaluation of the presidential powers of appointment, and how these powers contribute to a corrupt justice system that favours national elites and discriminates against foreign corporations as well as Haratine and Afro-Mauritanians could also be a valuable part of this policy. It could include an evaluation of how judicial positions are appointed, and changes in favour of a more impartial approach. Lastly, more focus needs to be placed on ethnic inequality in terms of access to justice. On this note it is important to take into consideration civil society organizations, especially reputable anti-slavery groups that represent the voices of the marginalized groups.

**Cluster/ALC:** Governance and Political Stability, Human Development; Legitimacy

**Relevance:** This option is relevant for Mauritania as the state has difficulty attracting investment due to complexities external actors face in obtaining and enforcing legal contracts.<sup>178</sup> This inability to attract investment affects has significant ramifications for government capacity as the extractive and fisheries sectors comprise 75% of government exports and revenue. A market conducive to investment could also create employment opportunities, an area where Mauritania has historically struggled. The legal system is unpredictable and susceptible to bribery in upholding the law.<sup>179</sup> Informal political influence exerted upon the courts<sup>180</sup> makes it nearly impossible for marginalized ethnic groups to achieve fairness before the law, further embedding the ethnic divisions that drive fragility in the country. This option is relevant for the EDF as it aligns with PIN's plans to strengthen the rule of law (one of three sectors of focus).

**Access points, partners, and stakeholders:** The EDF is already working in partnership with Mauritania to implement PIN. This policy option would require extra involvement of the Ministry of Justice to coordinate evaluations of transparency and patronage within the judicial ranks, as well as to provide training opportunities to justice sector employees. As the majority of decision-making power within the government lies with the Beydane, it will also be important to engage civil society organizations, such as El Hor, that represent the interests of those most vulnerable to discrimination by the courts.



**Risks:** Conflict with national elites, especially those who have long benefited economically from the patronage systems embedded in Mauritanian courts, may occur. While it is important to work with state leaders, it will be important to have impartial third-parties conducting evaluations to avoid biases.

**Measuring results:** The desired outcomes for justice reform and their corresponding indicators for measurement can be found in the chart below. A combination of National Statistics, third party statistics, and independent surveys could be used to measure these indicators to avoid bias from national elites.

Desired Outcome	Measurement	Method of Verification
Increased investment by foreign governments and multinational corporations	-Foreign direct investment as a percentage of GDP	Baseline data collection, where relevant, with monitoring data collected annually and final evaluation conducted at the end of programming. Data can come from: relevant Ministries (e.g. Ministry of Justice); the National School for the Training of the Judiciary; World Bank; UNDP; and independent surveys
Equitable access to efficient and independent services in the justice sector is strengthened	-Number / Percentage of judicial positions appointed directly by the President -Number / Percentage of judicial staff (including professional associations) who participated in a full initial and continuing training cycle -Number/Percentage of people seeking reparations through the courts (disaggregated by gender, age, ethnic group)	
Protection of human rights and equality between men and women, as well as between ethnic groups, and access to remedies for violations are supported	-Number of people who requested and received legal advice / assistance (criminal and civil) by type of service each year (disaggregated data by sex)	

## Annex 1: Definitions and Additional Readings

### Horizontal Inequalities

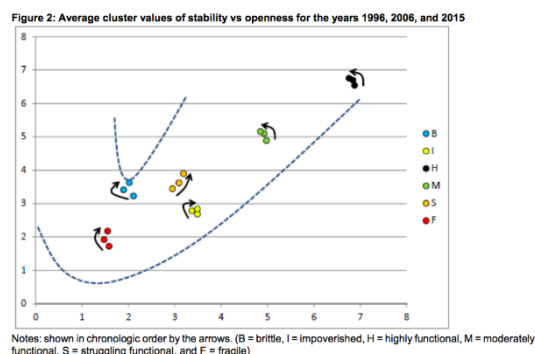
Horizontal inequalities (HIs) can occur along a number of dimensions, including ethnic, social, or political. Stewart et al. examine how HIs govern access to resources and affect political stability. Through an analysis of eight countries, Stewart et al. conclude that socioeconomic HIs increase the probability of conflict arising, especially if political HIs run in the same direction. Haratine and Afro-Mauritanians in Mauritania have been subject to persistent political *and* socioeconomic discrimination. This contrasts with HIs in a country such as Malaysia, for example, where the economically impoverished Malays are politically advantaged, resulting in a peaceful equilibrium. As such, Mauritania faces a risk of violent mobilization if inequalities are not addressed. Acknowledging this risk, we designed our policy options around actively addressing different dimensions of HIs in Mauritania.

#### References:

Stewart, F., Brown, G. and Langer A. (2008) “Major Findings and Conclusions on the Relationship Between Horizontal Inequalities and Conflict” in Stewart et. al. eds., *Horizontal Inequalities and Conflict*. Palgrave.

### The J Curve and Democratic Transitions

Adopting Ian Bremmer’s J-Curve, Carment et al. (2017) construct an enhanced stability vs openness formulation, using dimensions of authority, legitimacy and capacity. States are grouped into six clusters or types based on their authority, legitimacy and capacity values. The scatter plot generated places states with high stability and openness on the upper right of the distribution, while the less stable and open states reside on the lower left of the distribution. Carment et al. (2017) test the volatility of state transitions and conclude that fragile states are the most volatile followed by brittle and impoverished states. Mauritania can be classified as a brittle state which is ostensibly stable but with restricted openness and is therefore likely to experience a relatively highly volatile state transition.



#### References:

Calleja, R., Carment, D., Tikuisis, P. and Haichin, M. (2017) “Backsliding and reversal: The J-Curve revisited”. UNU-WIDER Working Paper.  
Bremmer, I. (2006). *The J Curve: A New Way to Understand Why Nations Rise and Fall*. New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc.

### Hybrid Regimes and Informal Institutions

Menocal et al. (2008) define hybrid regimes as ambiguous systems with fragile democratic structures and “occupy a middle ground between outright authoritarianism and fully-fledged democracy”. These regimes are usually characterized with a lack of capacity to meet the basic needs of the people. Other characteristics include; strong-man leadership or presidentialism, lack of trust in formal institutions, the coexistence of formal and informal institutions and clientelism and corruption. Mauritania presents a perfect paradigm of these characteristic, which supports our classification of Mauritania as a hybrid regime. Democratic processes often do exist in these contexts. Menocal et al. (2008) recognize however that the holding of elections alone does not provide a cure for deeper structural issues, nor do they result in effective governance. A weak democratic political culture and a lack of consensus to uphold democracy is often endemic in hybrid regimes. In other words, there is no institutionalized uncertainty. People may be attached to the idea of democracy, but they lack commitment to its specific institutions. The authors also suggest that although economic development is not a necessary component for the emergence of democracy, as Przeworski et al. (1997) explain, a failure to respond to people’s needs and generate economic growth impacts the sustainability of the transition, although Menocal et al. highlight that fully-fledged reversals have been few.



Bratton (2007) explains that informal institutions, including charisma and clientelism, are ingrained in African political life. So is the case in Mauritania. Informal practices seep into the formal operations of the state. Bratton explains that people turn to informal institutions because formal rules are persistently weak. Public support for ‘choosing a leader’ may be strong in Africa, but people harbour doubt about the quality of these elections and the accountability of leadership. The public support for elections is not accompanied with a commitment to other institutions of democracy such as independent courts and legislatures.

#### References:

- Menocal, A. R., Fritz, V., and Rakner, L. (2008) “Hybrid regimes and the challenges of deepening and sustaining democracy in developing countries”. *South African Journal of International Affairs*, 15(1): 29-40.
- Bratton, Michael. (2007) “Institutionalizing Democracy in Africa: Formal or Informal?” *Journal of Democracy* 18(3): 96-110.
- Przeworski, A. & Limongi, F. (1997). “Modernization: theories and facts”. *World Politics*, 49(2): 155-183.

#### Capacity Traps, Legitimacy Traps and Policy Implications

A lack of capacity to provide for its citizens and low legitimacy are the primary determinants of state fragility. Takeuchi et al. (2011) introduce a theoretical framework for interventions in fragile states by categorizing them into capacity trap countries and legitimacy trap countries. Capacity trap state are those which have failed to provide services and thus lack legitimacy, while legitimacy trap countries are able to deliver services but have shaky legitimacy as a result of authoritarian management and inequalities. This dynamic capacity-legitimacy interaction fuels the looming fragility in Mauritania. The government’s weak capacity to provide services along with persisting horizontal inequalities suggests that Mauritania occupies a peculiar middle ground. Takeuchi et al. suggests that in capacity trap countries, donor interventions should be designed to foster trust in public authority to enhance legitimacy, while in legitimacy trap countries, efforts to providing assistance to disadvantaged populations may enhance legitimacy. We suggest a two-pronged policy response in Mauritania. In terms of interventions in such contexts, Ismail (2016) stipulates that following a social contract framework which places citizens and the state into a principal-agent relationship, external actors should ensure their interventions do not fracture this balance of power by weakening the bargaining power of society.

#### References:

- Takeuchi, S., Murotani R. and Tsunekawa, K. (2011) “Capacity Traps and Legitimacy Traps: Development Assistance and State Building in Fragile Situations”. In *Catalyzing Development: A New Vision for Aid*, ed. Kharas H., Makino, K. and Jung, W. Brookings Institute Press. [https://www.jica.go.jp/jica-ri/publication/booksandreports/jrft3q000000292s- att/Catalyzing\\_Development\\_Chapter06.pdf](https://www.jica.go.jp/jica-ri/publication/booksandreports/jrft3q000000292s-att/Catalyzing_Development_Chapter06.pdf)
- Ismail, A. A. (2016). “The Political Economy of State Failure: A Social Contract Approach”. *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 10(4): 513-529.

## Annex 2: Further detail on internal stakeholders

### Classification of internal stakeholders by level of influence on fragility

Internal stakeholders are classified by influence according to their current ability to impact fragility in their sphere of focus and the size of their audience/supporters.

<u>Highly influential</u>	<u>Relatively influential</u>	<u>Not very influential</u>
<u>President Aziz and his party, UPR</u>	Ould Ghazouani (Minister of Defence, potential successor to President)	<u>Judiciary</u>
<u>Tewassoul</u>	Cheikh Ould Baya (speaker of Parliament, potential successor to President)	Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI)
<u>Military</u>	Sidi Mohamed Ould Maham (spokesperson and former party head, potential successor to President)	<u>Haratine</u>
Informal networks and groups based on tribal and ethnic ties, as well as personal connections	Front National pour la Démocratie et l'Unité (FNDU) coalition	<u>Afro-Mauritanians</u>
<u>Beydane (e.g. elite Beydane tribes and decisionmakers)</u>	Alliance Populaire Progressiste (APP)	<u>Urban middle class</u>
	<u>Civil society stakeholders (e.g. El Hor, IRA, FLAM, SOS Esclaves)</u>	

### Further information on stakeholders appearing in-text (in order appearing in-text)

#### **Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz and presidential powers**

- The President has large scale unilateral powers by virtue of the Constitution
- He also enjoys significant informal powers through elite networks
- Institutions, such as the National Assembly, the Senate, and local municipal councils, although elected, are highly dependent on the president. For example, the president has the power to dissolve the National Assembly
- He won the 2014 election with over 80% of the vote, although most of the opposition boycotted this election
- He has alternately ignored the opposition's calls for dialogue and attempted to organize national conferences for dialogue, with unsuccessful results
- A constitutional referendum in 2017 supported President Aziz's proposal to eliminate the Senate
- Aziz's party, **L'Union pour la République (UPR)**<sup>181</sup> consists of mainly local notables, businessmen, and civil servants who pledge allegiance to the president and depend on his formal and informal power to distribute positions of power and patronage

#### **Tewassoul**

- Has been the main opposition party since the 2013 legislative elections
- Formally named The National Rally for Reform and Development (RNRD)
- Has been accused of having ties with the Muslim Brotherhood

#### **Alliance Populaire Progressiste (APP)**

- Led by a former slave and minister under the previous regime, Messaoud Ould Belkheir

#### **Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI)**

- In mid-2018, FNDU submitted a request to the Supreme Court that CENI be dissolved, but the verdict has not yet been reached
- In the September 2018 election, opposition parties accused CENI of failing to ensure fair elections, with manipulation and mix-ups around voter lists and moved polling stations, although CENI maintained that the elections had proceeded normally, albeit with a few technical problems

#### **Judiciary**

- Is represented at the highest level by the Supreme Court, with its magistrate
- appointed by the president for a five-year term

- Mauritania has 43 tribunals, created by the 1991 Constitution, that bridge the gap between the traditional qadi (traditional magistrates) and modern court systems. These courts are staffed by qadis trained in Koranic law
- The President has the right to appoint three of the six judges sitting in the Constitutional Court

### **Military**

- Mauritania has a long history of military coups and leadership; every leadership change has occurred through a coup d'état
- Has been supported financially by the European Union in its counter-terrorism work in the region
- Remains ethnically divided, with upper military ranks generally reserved to Beydane

### **El Hor**

- Focuses on social issues and has been demanding justice for marginalized ethnic populations since the 1970s
- El Hor means “freedom”
- Is a key civil society actor within the Haratine population
- Has historically been treated with hostility by the State, with members subject to arrests and even torture
- Is currently led by Samory Ould Bèye

### **Initiative pour la Résurgence du Mouvement Abolitionniste (IRA)**

- An anti-slavery organization, founded in 2008
- Has a large network of activists
- The Government of Mauritania has refused its registration as a non-governmental organization, citing that it acts against national unity
- Many of IRA's activists have been jailed due to their involvement or alleged involvement in protests and riots and authorities often break up or prevent demonstrations organized by IRA. IRA organizes protests around this oppression, with most recent protests occurring in October 2018 to call for the release of Ould Abeid, one of IRA's founders

### **African Liberation Forces of Mauritania (FLAM)**

- Encompasses four Afro-Mauritanian movements and works to dismantle the Beydane system in favour of an egalitarian system free from ethnic marginalization
- While it does not rule out armed conflict if necessary, it does not advocate for violence, rather favouring dialogue and cooperation
- President is Mamadou Sidi Ba

### **SOS Esclaves**

- Created in 2007, emerging from the El Hor movement and founded by Boubacar Ould Messaoud
- Is a key actor advocating for past and currently enslaved persons in Mauritania and can be considered the most important organization against slavery in Mauritania
- Has links to several external stakeholders, including European governmental donors and the International Labor Organisation
- In 2016, won a landmark case brought forward with Anti-Slavery International, with the Mauritanian courts ordering that two slave-owners pay compensation

### **Biram Dah Abeid**

- President of IRA and runner-up in Mauritania's 2014 presidential election
- Was imprisoned in 2015 and has since been released
- Has won awards from the United States Department of State and the UN for his work in human rights

### **Fatimata Mbaye**

- One of only three female Mauritanian lawyers
- Has won international awards for her work fighting for the rights of black Mauritians, women, and children
- Is president of the Mauritanian Association for Human Rights (AMDH)



**Oumar Ould Beibacar**

- A rare Beydane activist, who is a retired colonel from the National Guard
- Has called for the State to recognize and make amends for past ethnically-targeted atrocities
- Limited influence at present; since 2015 he has been under judicial control and is facing legal charges for his activism

**Informal networks and groups based on tribal and ethnic ties, as well as personal connections**

- Operate on trust, cooperation, and loyalty
- Mauritania's government sought to minimize the influence of tribes in the period between 1960 to 1986

**Additional stakeholders not appearing in-text (in alphabetical order)****Ibrahima Sarr**

- A well-known activist and spokesperson for the Afro-Mauritanian community
- Has been involved in the APP political party

**Touche pas ma nationalité**

- A movement that has staged small protests or sit-ins
- Their dissent is limited by the fact that activists face hostile authorities who have them removed by force and even jailed

## Annex 3: Further detail on external stakeholders

### Further information on stakeholders appearing in-text (in order appearing in-text)

#### **International governments and state bodies**

- They see President Aziz, who spearheaded the creation of the G5 Sahel regional anti-terrorism force, as a key partner in fighting Islamist extremism in the region
- Mauritania annually receives approximately \$300 million USD in development aid
- Development aid targets sectors such as humanitarian assistance, social infrastructure, education, health, and population

#### **External stakeholders advocating for human rights**

- President Trump announced in November 2018 that he intends to end Mauritania's trade benefits under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) until Mauritania eradicates forced labour and hereditary slavery
- The African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child determined in a landmark legal ruling in December 2017 that Mauritania had breached its obligations under the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
- Anti-Slavery International supported the 2016 landmark court case with SOS Esclaves

#### **Neighbouring states**

- Over 57,000 Malian refugees currently live in Mauritania's Mbera refugee camp, in southeastern Mauritania. Smaller numbers of Malian refugees live in urban centers elsewhere in Mauritania
- Migrants from countries such as Senegal, the Gambia, and Guinea pass through Mauritania on their way to Morocco and Europe
- Senegal and Mauritania had severe border conflict in 1989, fueled by drought and natural resource use and resulting in large-scale expulsion of Mauritanians from Senegal and vice-versa. They have had a relatively peaceful relationship in recent years, although there have been some tensions over illegal Senegalese fishing in Mauritanian waters

#### **Foreign investors and companies**

- Major companies in the extractive industries related to oil, iron, and mining include Rex Diamond, Woodside, and SMGI; in car retail include Toyota and Nissan, and in fishing include Hong Dong and Baiyang Investment Group

## Annex 4: Additional information and analysis regarding clusters

Clusters appear in same order as the brief.

### **Governance and Political Stability**

- All administrative regions have courts, but most are understaffed and underfinanced, and undermined by arbitrary decisions
- In 2015, three courts specializing on crimes related to slavery were established, but only one case has been handled by these courts so far

### **Environment and Sustainability**

- Average monthly temperatures vary between 20 to 35 degrees Celsius (hottest in July, coolest in January)
- The dry season lasts from November to March, with essentially no rainfall during this period.
- Rainfall is highly variable across the country: the south receives annual rainfall around 450 mm while the north receives only 50 mm
- Many Mauritania are nomadic
- Flooding is especially problematic in cities around August, as the sewer systems are unable to deal with heavy rainfall
- With poor urban planning and regulations, many people live on flood plains
- Climate change is also resulting in higher temperatures; increased water consumption linked to rising temperatures and a growing population may lead to depletion of already-limited freshwater
- A number of Haratine activists have been arrested regarding land access issues and there have been protests around expulsion of poor Haratine families from unregistered land
- Access to agricultural and grazing land is politically important and controversial
- Land acquired by Moors and Haratine during the Senegal-Mauritania conflict in 1989 is still disputed by Afro-Mauritania who were expelled from the country
- Mauritania has some of the world's best fishing areas and fishing accounts for roughly 15% of the country's budget revenues, but this resource is overexploited by national and foreign fishers Use of pesticides in the Senegal River Valley in the south of the country, along with pollution and spills from mining companies, are key environmental threats
- There has been some work to increase the resilience of the country to environmental stressors, for example through programs on drought control, irrigation, emergency preparedness, and food security

### **Security**

- President Aziz has managed to contain Haratine activism and some ethnic tensions thus far by appointing individuals from marginalized groups to positions of power
- In terms of the institutional stability of the Armed Forces, it is worth noting that regional historical conflicts with the Polisario have largely weakened the military<sup>182</sup> and ethnic divisions extend to the ranks of the Mauritanian Armed Forces, in 2005 90% of its officers were white Moors of Arab and Berber origin while only 7% were Haratine and 3% black Africans<sup>183</sup>

### **Demography and Population**

- Youth bulge can be measured by the population ages 0-14, as percent of total population
- Like average trends across sub-Saharan Africa, fertility rates and the youth bulge are moving in the right direction and have been falling consistently over recent decades
- Populations living in the south of Mauritania are most densely located along the border with Senegal and Mali
- There is a low population density in the desert in the northeastern part of the country
- Roughly 75% of refugees in Mauritania live in the Mbera refugee camp
- SOS Esclaves estimates that roughly 18% of Mauritania's population may be enslaved, a very different number from Global Slavery Index's estimate of 2.1%
- Mauritania's Government Response Rating was C- in 2018, worsening from a rating of C in 2016 (the lowest grade is D+, highest is A-)
- Mauritania is a "net sender" of modern slaves
- Mauritania was the last country in the world to make slavery illegal and anti-slavery laws are rarely enforced, with the government often hampering anti-slavery movements by harassing or arresting activists. President Aziz has repeatedly denied that slavery is an issue in the country. The United Nations Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery visited Mauritania in 2014, praising the

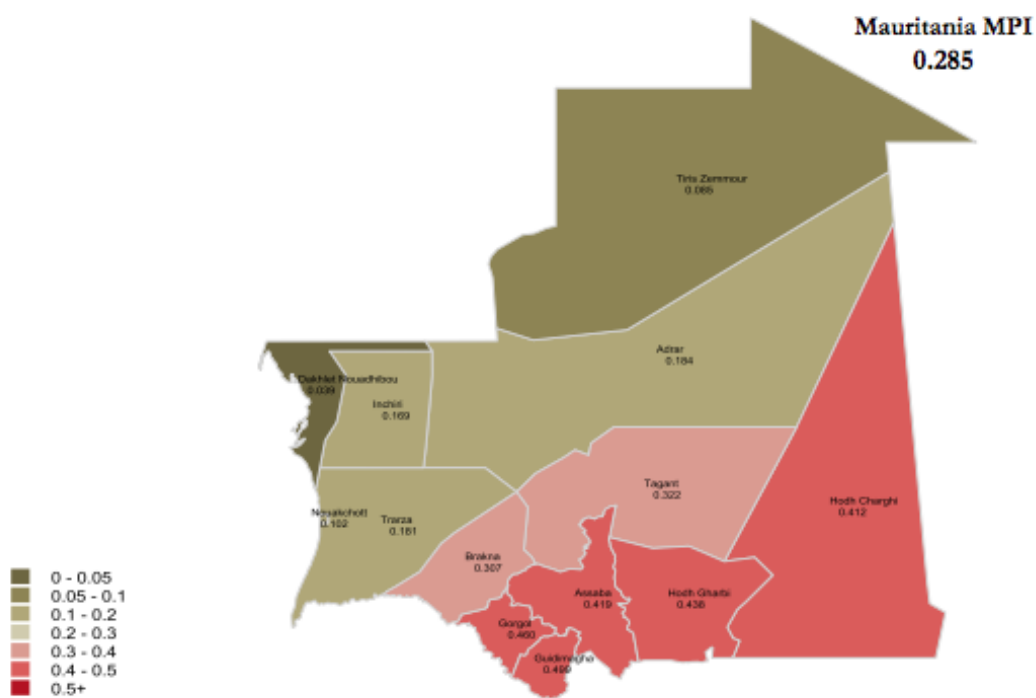


Government's progress on legislative and institutional measures but highlighting that laws and policies are not fully implemented and that criminal prosecutions of slaveholders remain low

### **Economic Development**

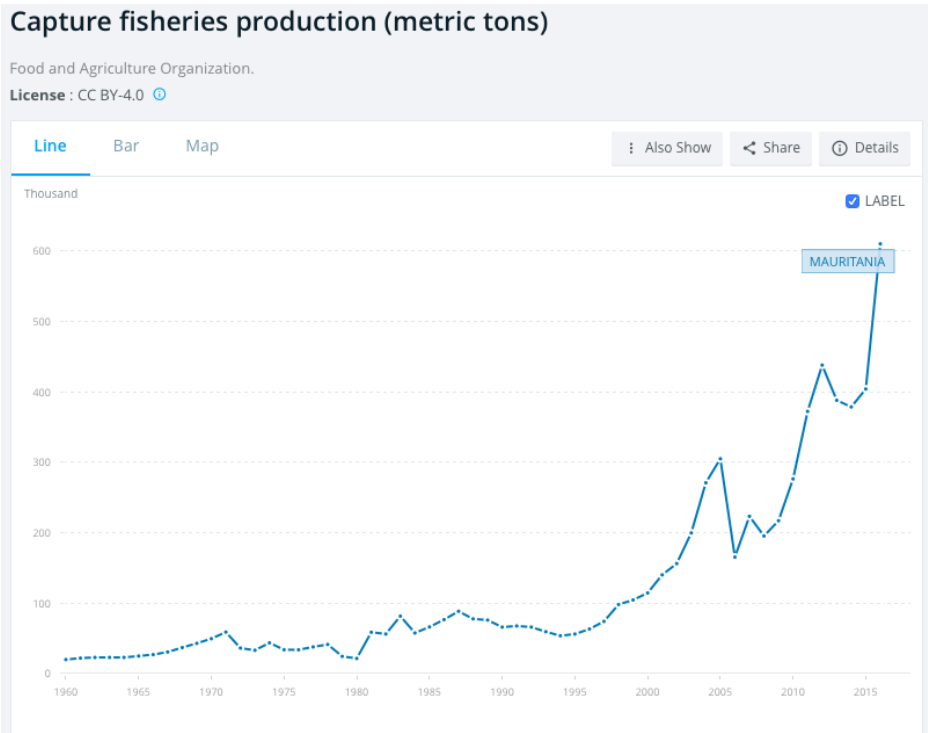
- Regarding low capacity and its effects on service provisions, in 2017 only 41% of the population had access to electricity and only 18% used the internet<sup>184</sup>
- Based on the percentage of revenue produced by the extractive sector, versus the number of employment opportunities it creates, it is clear that natural resources need to be better leveraged to allow for job creation and capacity building
- There is still nearly a 40% disparity between the proportion of women and men engaged in the labour force<sup>185</sup>

Annex 5: Multidimensional Poverty in Mauritania



# Annex 6: Fisheries production since 1960<sup>186</sup>

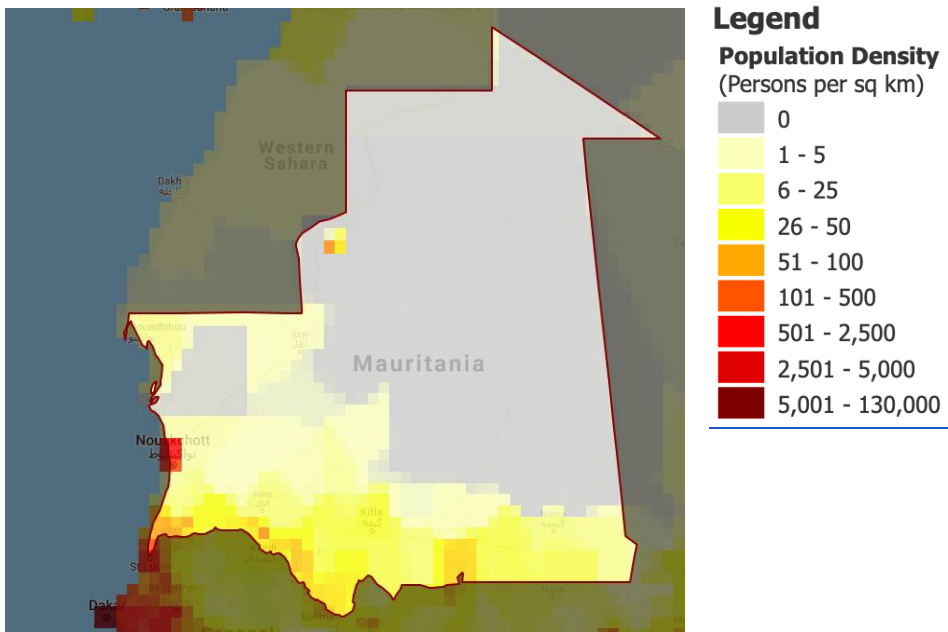
Fisheries production has skyrocketed since the turn of the century, with potentially unsustainable resource use.





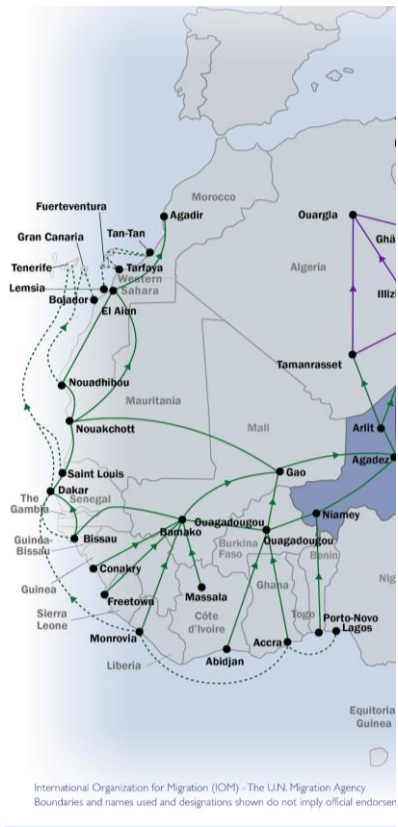
# Annex 7: Mauritania's Population Density (2015)<sup>187</sup>

Besides a few urban centres along the western coast, such as the capital, Nouakchott, and the second largest city, Nouadhibou, the population is densest in the south of the country.



Annex 8: Migration routes affecting Mauritania<sup>188 189</sup>

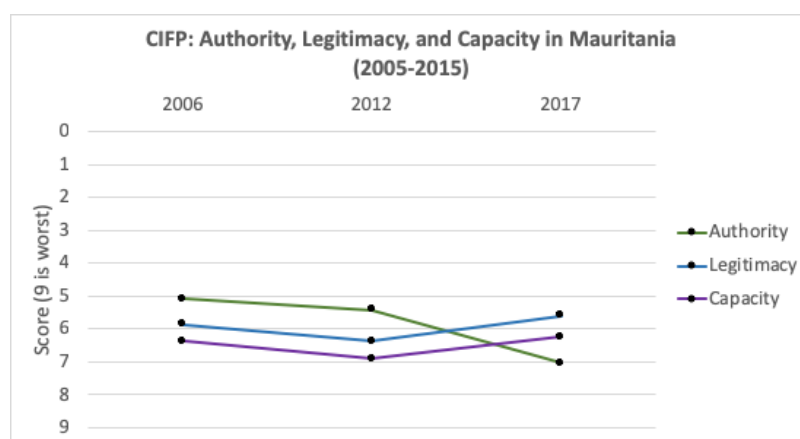
Migration routes pass through Mauritania on the way to Morocco and Europe.



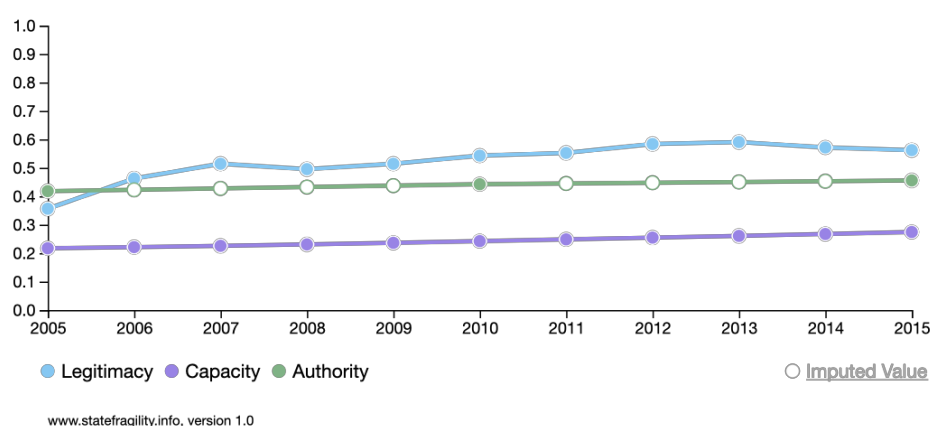
## Annex 9: Fragility ratings for Mauritania, overall and by ALC

Index	Rating/Rank and Trend Analysis
Country Indicators for Foreign Policy <sup>190 191 192</sup>  *Minimum rating of 1 is best, maximum of 9 is worst	<p>2016: 27th most fragile in the world, with a rating of 6.48 (most fragile country had a rating of 7.63 and 60th most fragile country a rating of 5.58)</p> <p>2015: 33rd most fragile in the world</p> <p>2014: 36th most fragile in the world</p> <p>2013: 19th most fragile in the world, with a rating of 6.25 (most fragile country had a rating of 7.91)</p> <p>2012: 7th most fragile in the world, with a rating of 6.76 (most fragile country had a rating of 7.61)</p> <p><i>While remaining outside of the top 20 most fragile states in recent years, Mauritania remains fragile and has seen declines since its best ranking in 2014</i></p>
Fragile States Index <sup>193</sup>	<p>2018: “Alert” level, being 31st most fragile in the world, with a rating of 92.2 (most fragile country had a rating of 113.4, 60th most fragile country a rating of 80.7, and least fragile country a rating of 17.9)</p> <p><i>Remaining outside of the top 20 most fragile states, Mauritania remains fragile but has been showing improvements since 2014</i></p>
DIE Constellations of Fragility <sup>194</sup>	<p><i>Relatively stable, with low to medium levels of performance, since 2005. There are incremental improvements across authority, legitimacy, and capacity over this time period. Capacity remains lowest, at 0.27 out of 1.</i></p>

### Authority, Legitimacy, and Capacity (ALC) in Mauritania, according to CIFP<sup>195</sup>



### Authority, Legitimacy, and Capacity (ALC) in Mauritania, according to DIE<sup>196</sup>



## Annex 10: Additional information and analysis regarding policy options

Option 2: Work with the Ministry of Agriculture and local stakeholders to increase the use of sustainable, resilient, and efficient agricultural practices and improve food security in the poorest provinces.

**Policy:** The programming should include technical training for low-income farmers and herders (both male and female) on sustainable and efficient agricultural practices; infrastructure development and maintenance, especially related to sustainable irrigation and power sources such as solar and increasing resilience to climate change and environmental shocks; and activities designed to improve food security in these provinces. It may also involve establishing dialogue between different types of land users, potentially also with local and national government, to develop actionable recommendations for land reform and fair, equitable access to natural resources.

A portion of funding should be allocated to results-based financing, wherein the Ministry of Agriculture must demonstrate collaboration with local stakeholders and verifiable progress towards program indicators and results amongst vulnerable and marginalized rural populations in order to receive funding. To promote long-term solutions, recognizing the complexity of these sectors, funding should cover as long a period as possible, ideally at least ten years

**Relevance (Mauritania):** Mauritania is a net food importer. Its vulnerability to world food prices has resulted in large protests related to soaring global food prices in 2007 and 2011, accompanied by looting and some deaths. Agriculture is the second largest source of employment for Mauritians. While the country has agricultural potential, this sector continues to underperform. For example, approximately 90% of arable land is cultivated in an inefficient manner, resulting in poor agricultural productivity. Poverty in rural areas of Mauritania is at 59%, compared to the national average of 43%. These areas have high concentrations of ethnically marginalized Haratine and Afro-Mauritians. Food insecurity and malnutrition persist in rural areas, reaching critical levels when droughts occur. The provinces of Gorgol, Guidimaka, Assaba, Hodh El Gharbi, and Hodh Ech Chargui, along the southern border of Mauritania, experience the highest levels of multidimensional poverty (see Figure 1 in text). They are also Mauritania's most promising provinces in terms of agricultural production. There are a number of ministries in Mauritania that are working towards progress in this sector. For example, the Ministry of Agriculture outlines five strategic objectives in its Vision 2025. The fourth strategic objective is the use of high-performing and suitable technological innovations to intensify and diversify agricultural production while respecting the environment. The fifth is inclusive and participatory development. Our policy option is well-aligned with both of these objectives.

**Relevance (EDF):** The European Union has dedicated significant funds to the Global Alliance for Resilience Initiative (AGIR-Sahel), which aims to reinforce the resilience of vulnerable populations to food and nutrition insecurity in the Sahel. AGIR-Sahel informed objectives under the EDF's Programme Indicatif National 2014-2020 (PIN), with PIN earmarking 40% of its budget to food security and sustainable agriculture. Our policy option aligns closely with PIN's general and specific objectives. For example, the General Objective related to food security and sustainable agriculture is to reinforce vulnerable populations' resilience to food and nutrition insecurity. Our policy option also aligns with Goal 4 (generate employment and improve livelihoods) of the New Deal, which the European Union has endorsed.

**Access points, partners, and stakeholders:** Relevant programs and projects that could serve as access points, inform partner and stakeholder selection, and complement this policy include: the Ministry of Agriculture's project on developing resilience to food insecurity in Mauritania (funded by the Islamic Development Bank) and the Ministry of Agriculture's project on reducing poverty in Aftout Sud and Karakoro (funded by the International Fund for Agricultural Development). The Government of Mauritania is developing PNPS in concert with technical and financial partners. Supporting sustainable agricultural development is also part of a regional objective outlined in the *Programme Accord de Partenariat Economique pour le Développement* (PAPED), which aims to rejuvenate trade between West Africa and the European Union.

### Option 3:

**Policy:** By focusing on goal number three of the New Deal, which highlights addressing injustices and increasing peoples' access to justice, we are also able to target the second sector of focus in the EDF's PIN, the rule of law. By tackling justice sector reform we are able to target two major drivers of fragility: ethnic inequalities and lack of investment in the rich extractive sector. Reform of the justice sector is proposed to reduce corruption and bribery, and to uphold the already existing laws without exception.

As it stands, the President has the power to appoint a majority of the top positions including half of the highest judicial institutions<sup>197</sup>.

As can be seen in objective two (2) stated in the EDF relevance section, the PIN has already placed a focus on gender equality and increasing access to justice for women. We suggest more of a focus needs to be placed on ethnic inequality which requires political will on behalf of the EU. On this note it is important to take into consideration civil society organizations, especially reputable anti-slavery groups that represent the voices of the marginalized groups.

**Relevance:** Under sector two of the Programme Indicatif National, the EDF seeks to promote access to independent and credible justice, which guarantees respect for human rights. More specifically, the objectives under the justice sector of this plan are as follows:

- Equitable and inclusive access to efficient and independent services in the justice sector is strengthened
- The promotion and protection of human rights and equality between men and women, and access to remedies for violations are supported

The EU also has a vested interest in maintaining security in Mauritania as part of their greater partnership for security in the Sahel region.

**Access Points:** Access points include: engaging with the El Hor pressure group, which focuses on social issues and has been demanding justice for marginalized ethnic populations since the 1970s; l'Initiative pour la Résurgence du Mouvement Abolitionniste (IRA), an anti-slavery organization; and the African Liberation Forces of Mauritania (FLAM), which encompasses four Afro-Mauritanian movements and works to dismantle the Beydane system in favour of an egalitarian system free from ethnic marginalization.

### Optional Additional Policy Option:

**Policy:** EDF allocates funding to The World Bank's Local Government Development Program (LGDP).<sup>198</sup> The LGDP was implemented in support of the government's decentralization policy framework, the National Integrated Program for Decentralization, Local Development and Employment (Program National Intégré pour la Décentralisation, le Développement Local et l'Emploi (PNIDDLE)), targeting 30 local governments and aimed at deepening the legal mandate for local governance, establishing a Regional Development Fund and improving local governments' institutional capacity. The LGDP was originally co-financed by the EU,<sup>199</sup> allocating conditional performance grants and targeted capacity support to local governments. Satisfactory results have been achieved,<sup>200</sup> however envelope reductions by the EU resulted in restructuring of the project and delays in issuing allocations.

**Cluster/ALC:** Governance and Political Stability, Human Development; Capacity, Authority, Legitimacy

**Relevance:** Decentralization is highly relevant to Mauritania's weak capacity to provide basic services which is attributed to the population distribution and inadequate infrastructure. It is also relevant to poverty reduction targets and our previous policy option on fighting corruption. In regards to EDF's National Indicative Programme 2014-2020, this policy option is relevant to the objective of decentralizing local governance to better serve local populations. Our policy option further aligns with Goal 5 (Manage revenue and build capacity for accountable and fair service delivery) of the New Deal,<sup>201</sup> endorsed by the EU.



**Risks:** The complexity of the institutional setup, multiple stakeholders involved, municipal and local councils also carry the risk of single party dominance extending to the local level encroaching upon existing power balances with ethnic minorities and tribes. Minimal gender equity at the local level is also a risk, and lack of capacity to enforce necessary check and balances over the local government.

**Access points:** The Inter-Ministerial Committee for Local Development and Decentralization (IMCDL), chaired by the Prime Minister (PM) with representation from all key ministries, oversees this process. This is in addition to the 30 local governments targeted by LGDP and PNIDDLE.

**Measuring Results:** Evaluation will consist of regular collection and monitoring of data and the annual performance assessments and regular field visits conducted by the LGDP project coordination unit. Following the models implemented in Rwanda, Guinea and Burkina Faso,<sup>202</sup> The Local Governance Transparency and Accountability in Africa Evaluation Framework (OGTAFA EF)<sup>203</sup> is also a good point of reference and assessment tool to measure the performance and good practices implemented by local governments.

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