



International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families

Distr.: General

3 March 2026

Original: English

Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families Forty-first session

Summary record of the 610th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Monday, 1 December 2025, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Ms. Diallo

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Consideration of reports submitted by States Parties under article 73 of the Convention

Second periodic report of Mauritania (CMW/C/MRT/2; CMW/C/MRT/Q/2; CMW/C/MRT/RQ/2)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Mauritania joined the meeting.*
2. *In accordance with the guidelines on the independence and impartiality of members of the human rights treaty bodies (the Addis Ababa guidelines), Mr. Babacar withdrew during the consideration of the second periodic report of Mauritania.*
3. **A representative of Mauritania**, introducing his country's second periodic report (CMW/C/MRT/2), which had been prepared with the participation of a wide range of relevant stakeholders, said that migration had always been an integral part of the social history of Mauritania, whether as a country of destination or a country with a large Mauritanian community abroad. Mauritania was currently hosting some 400,000 refugees, most from Mali, and their number was growing. In accordance with the commitments made at the Global Refugee Forum in 2023, the Government ensured that they had access to vital records, the labour market, healthcare and education.
4. In recent years, his Government's legislative framework for the protection of migrants had been made more robust. Legislative changes had been made to sanction abuses more severely, and migrant children had been afforded greater protection under the General Child Protection Code, adopted in 2018. An overhaul of the Labour Code had been informed in part by the need to address the vulnerability of workers. That strengthened legislative framework had been complemented by a number of institutional developments, including the recent establishment of a court that specialized in combating slavery, trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants, the National Agency on Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants and an office for mutual legal assistance. Steps had also been taken to ensure that those administrative measures had a tangible impact on the ground.
5. The National Migration Management Strategy was regularly re-evaluated, and the preparation of a second five-year plan (2026–2030) was under way to improve the protection of migrants. The National Social Protection Strategy, for its part, had a section on the promotion and protection of the rights of migrants. A campaign that had begun in 2022 had made it possible to regularize the migration status of some 147,000 foreign nationals, including 10,500 children. Efforts had also been made to ensure that migrant children attended school, and a monthly preschool allowance was given to 3,400 children of migrant families, regardless of their status.
6. An increasing number of judicial and other measures had been taken to combat trafficking in persons. In recent years, for example, convictions had been secured in more than a hundred such trafficking cases. Victims of trafficking in persons had been given the support they needed.
7. The Government had devoted special attention to unaccompanied minors, who were particularly vulnerable. For example, in 2024 and 2025, some 75 migrant children had been received in the Centre for the Protection and Social Integration of Children.
8. Emergency healthcare had been made free of charge, including for migrant workers, and other steps had been taken to make healthcare in general more accessible. Measures to promote access to justice had also been adopted. Interpreters, for example, had been hired to assist the parties to judicial proceedings.
9. Forty-six consular or other diplomatic offices had been opened in part to provide services to the large Mauritanian community abroad. There were 52 polling places in different parts of the world, and the expatriate community was represented by four members of the National Assembly. Steps had been taken to facilitate money transfers and other cross-border financial transactions.
10. In recent years, Mauritania had concluded migration cooperation agreements with neighbouring countries, such as Senegal, and with Spain. In March 2024, Mauritania and the

European Union had made a joint declaration establishing a migration partnership. Shared responsibility and the promotion of safe and regular migration were among the common themes of those cooperation agreements and partnerships.

11. Campaigns to raise awareness of the dangers of irregular migration had been organized, and training on migration matters had been provided to around 1,800 judges and prosecutors, police officers, municipal officials and representatives of civil society. In all, 450 million ouguiyas a year was set aside for efforts to combat trafficking in persons.

12. As a result of instability in the Sahara, however, migrants continued to flow towards Mauritania, which was taking a comprehensive approach to migration management. That approach would involve making labour inspections more effective, improving reception facilities, increasing cooperation with other countries and intensifying efforts to combat trafficking in persons.

13. In a statement on his visit to Mauritania in early September 2025, the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants had welcomed the legal and institutional framework that the Mauritanian authorities had put in place for migration management. He had also called on the international community to help the Mauritanian authorities build their migration-management capacity and step up efforts to reach out to relevant stakeholders. Consideration would certainly be given to the Special Rapporteur's recommendations.

14. **Mr. Oumaria** (Country Rapporteur), welcoming the legislative and institutional steps that the State Party had taken to promote and protect the rights of migrant workers, said that he wished to know whether the practical impact of those steps, in particular the establishment of the court specialized in combating slavery, trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants had been assessed, and, if so, whether the National Human Rights Commission and civil society had been involved in the assessment. It would be interesting to know what some of that court's most significant rulings were.

15. He wondered whether the State Party had evaluated the impact of the partnership agreement with the European Union, which had reportedly pushed prospective migrants into the hands of smugglers and made migration both more expensive and less safe. In particular, he wondered whether the agreement was conducive to the achievement of its ostensible goals, namely the promotion of safe, orderly and regular migration, and whether the administrative measures provided for in the agreement, such as the opening of offices to facilitate the issuance of visas to prospective migrants, had been taken.

16. **Ms. Poussi** (Country Rapporteur) said that she wished to know which of the five overarching objectives set out in the National Migration Management Strategy 2021–2030 was closest to being attained and which one it would be most difficult to attain. She also wished to know what steps were being taken to overcome the expected difficulties. In addition, she wondered what specifically was being done to collaborate with neighbouring countries, Algeria and Mali in particular, and to provide support for border communities. In that connection, she would welcome a detailed description of the work carried out by the Office for International Legal Assistance on behalf of migrant workers and members of their families. An indication of the steps that were being taken to combat organized crime, terrorism and other such activities would also be welcome. It would be helpful to learn what particularly effective measures had been taken under the Strategy to promote the fundamental rights of migrants and combat trafficking in persons.

17. She wished to know what institutions were involved in migration management and what mechanisms had been set up to enable them to coordinate their work. On a more specific issue, she wondered what was meant by the State Party's assertion in the replies to the list of issues (CMW/C/MRT/RQ/2, para. 11 (e)) that the removal of jurors from the composition of the Specialized Court to Combat Slavery, Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants and abolition of the system of voting gave rise to debates about accountability and could hamper proceedings.

18. She would welcome a more comprehensive description of the standard operating procedures applicable to the disembarkation, registration and care of migrants rescued at sea and taken to the State Party. In particular, it would be interesting to know whether those procedures were already in place and which institutions, such as the National Human Rights

Commission, were expected to follow them. It would also be useful to know how those institutions coordinated or intended to coordinate their activities and what would happen if they deviated from the standard operating procedures. It would be helpful to learn how the referral mechanism used by the National Agency on Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants worked, whether the fund for aid and assistance to victims of trafficking in persons had the necessary resources and how many victims the fund aided and assisted each year, particularly migrant workers and members of their families.

19. She wished to know whether the specialized commissions that would apparently be made part of the Agency had been set up and were active. It would be also helpful to find out exactly what those commissions were meant to specialize in.

20. It would be interesting to know whether the process of registering foreign nationals present in the State Party had been completed. Similarly, it would be interesting to know how many Mauritanian nationals lived outside the country. Figures had been provided, but the State Party had acknowledged that they were only approximate.

21. She wondered whether migrant workers in the State Party enjoyed guarantees of non-refoulement regardless of their migration status, what the nationalities of the nearly 19,700 migrants who had been detained and expelled in the first semester of 2025 were, whether those expelled migrants' cases had been considered individually and, if not, why they had been made subject to collective expulsion, in breach of article 22 (1) of the Convention. She would welcome a comment on reports that European and other migration enforcement activities, including illegal expulsions, had been outsourced to the State Party under agreements with the European Union and countries such as Spain. It would be helpful to learn whether the enforcement operations under those agreements were subject to any independent oversight.

22. **The Chair** (Country Rapporteur) said that she wished to know whether the State Party intended to ratify the International Labour Organization (ILO) Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97), and the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189). In view of the State Party's stated intention to end all forms of child labour by the end of 2025, she also wished to know how many children were currently engaged in the worst forms of labour or whether the goal of ending all child labour, particularly the worst forms, had been achieved.

23. She wondered what measures were taken to ensure that migrants in an irregular situation were not subject to collective expulsion, that they were properly notified of and could challenge any expulsion order they received, that they could apply for the suspension of expulsion proceedings while their cases were being examined and that they could exercise other relevant rights, including those on which the Committee had elaborated in its general comment No. 2 (2013) on the rights of migrant workers in an irregular situation and members of their families. She would welcome an indication of the legislation under which thousands of migrant workers in an irregular situation had recently been expelled. An indication of whether there were any plans to bring the law into line with international standards would also be welcome.

24. It was unusual for States to have at their disposal accurate and comprehensive statistical information on their nationals abroad, even though such information made possible the provision of targeted assistance. She therefore wished to know whether the Mauritanian authorities were making any efforts to collect better population data on the Mauritanian diaspora.

25. She would welcome further information on the bilateral migration management agreements that the State Party had entered into with France and Spain. For example, she wondered exactly what measures they provided for. She also wondered how many migrants had been placed in secure accommodation where they were safe from smugglers, how many had been able to extend their stays in the State Party and how many had successfully applied for legal status. In addition, it would be helpful to learn how many migrant workers had benefited from the diplomatic and consular legal assistance, financial support and security measures mentioned by the State Party in its replies to the list of issues ([CMW/C/MRT/RQ/2](#), para. 41) and how many migrants subject to expulsion had been put in touch with the consular or other diplomatic authorities of their presumed countries of origin.

26. Noting that the State Party's courts had never invoked the Convention in any of their rulings, she wished to know what procedures were in place to ensure that migrant workers and members of the families enjoyed equality of treatment with Mauritanian nationals in relation to access to justice, including the possibility of challenging administrative decisions.

27. She also wished to know whether the State Party, which was largely arid, had experienced migration or population displacement as a result of climate change and, if so, what the magnitude of that form of migration or displacement was and what measures were being taken to help enhance the resilience of climate migrants and protect their rights. In view of the recent tightening of border controls in the United States of America, she also wondered whether anything was being done to facilitate the return to the State Party of the increasing numbers of prospective migrants who travelled first to Latin America, Nicaragua in particular, in a bid to reach the United States.

28. **Mr. Charef** said that it would be useful to know how the State Party intended to apply the many commendable legal instruments for the management of migration that it had developed in recent years, given that it straddled a migration route extending as far south as Guinea-Bissau, which was becoming increasingly busy. It would also be helpful to know what steps were being taken to familiarize civil society and prospective migrants with the Convention and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and whether the authorities were familiar with the Committee's general comment No. 6 (2024) on the convergent protection of the rights of migrant workers and members of their families through the Convention and the Global Compact.

29. References both to administrative holding centres and to reception centres appeared in the replies of the State Party to the list of issues. Both types of centres were clearly meant for migrants, but he wondered how they differed, how many people they accommodated, how they operated and who managed them. He also wondered what the objective of the memorandum of understanding with Spain regarding circular migration was and what effect it had had in practice. Lastly, he would welcome a description of the State Party's efforts to involve local non-governmental organizations that were especially active in communities on the right bank of the Senegal River in larger-scale development activities.

30. **Mr. Corzo Sosa** said that he wished to know how successful the State Party's efforts had been in addressing trafficking in persons for the purpose of slavery in particular and what results had been obtained in linking such trafficking to slavery, as opposed to other forms of exploitation such as forced labour. He wondered whether the delegation could respond to the concerns expressed by the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants in his preliminary findings and observations on his September 2025 visit to Mauritania, including concerns relating to the frequent arrests of migrants, poor detention conditions, collective expulsions, the treatment of migrant women, police corruption, racial discrimination and, in cases of disembarkation, the failure to systematically refer unaccompanied children to specialized agencies.

31. **Mr. Ceriani Cernadas** said that he wished to know what forms of consular assistance the State Party provided to Mauritanian migrants, including unaccompanied children, in the Canary Islands and whether the consulates coordinated with the Spanish authorities in providing assistance to the migrants. He would be grateful for further information on the State Party's rescue operations at sea, including the procedures followed in identifying the deceased and notifying their relatives. It would be helpful to know to what extent the survivors faced detention and deportation; whether alternatives, such as international protection, were available to them; whether all the details of the bilateral agreements relating to border control, including those with Spain and the European Union, had been made public; and how responsibilities in joint operations were delegated under those agreements.

32. It would be helpful to have a list of the facilities in the State Party where migrants were deprived of their liberty. He would like to know whether children and families could be detained at those facilities and whether civil society and independent monitoring organizations were allowed to enter them. He wondered whether the State Party had investigated reports regarding the abuse of persons facing deportation and the arbitrary confiscation of their property and whether it was true that persons had been deported even when they held protection documents issued by the Office of the United Nations High

Commissioner for Refugees. He would appreciate information on the living conditions at the Mbera refugee camp and the legal status of the persons housed there.

33. In the light of reports received by the Committee that the treatment of migrants depended on factors such as their skin colour, religion and ethnic origin, he wished to know whether any anti-discrimination measures had been taken and whether information on the prevalence of racism and racial discrimination was available. He would be grateful for information on the working conditions of migrant workers, including those in an irregular situation, in sectors such as fishing and mining and on the situation of migrant children in domestic work or in situations of begging. He wished to know the extent to which persons in an irregular situation had access to regularization processes, and how many persons who had participated in the 2022 regularization programme had received a residence permit. He would appreciate the delegation's comments on reports that migrant children without migration documentation faced obstacles to gaining access to the exams required for transitioning from primary school to secondary school.

34. **Ms. Dzumhur** said that she wished to know to what extent civil society had been involved in the development of the most recent National Migration Management Strategy and the associated action plan, if any; what obstacles were preventing the State Party from ratifying relevant ILO conventions; and what the status was of the national action plan to combat the smuggling of migrants being drawn up by the National Agency on Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants. It would be helpful to know how many cases had been decided by the recently established Specialized Court to Combat Slavery, Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants and what training its judges had received. She would also like to find out whether the State Party had established a national preventive mechanism in accordance with the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and, if so, whether the mechanism was authorized to visit places where migrants were detained. She wondered whether the State Party had statistics on the number of Mauritanian migrant children abroad, whether any bilateral agreements were in place with the main countries of origin of the migrants who transited through Mauritania and what steps the State Party took to inform its nationals abroad and migrants in transit of their rights. She would also be interested to know what services the National Agency on Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants provided to migrants; how many migrants the Agency had assisted; how many Mauritanian nationals had been repatriated from Spain; what assistance the State Party provided to them; whether civil society organizations were allowed to assist migrants in refugee camps; how many persons the State Party had been detained on migration grounds; and what remedies were available to them.

35. **Mr. Kariyawasam** said that he wished to know what steps the State Party took during the negotiation of bilateral agreements regarding the return of migrant workers to ensure that those agreements were in line with the Convention and other core international human rights treaties. He would also like to know to what extent members of the negotiating teams were aware of the provisions of the Convention.

36. **Mr. Taghi-Zada** said that he wished to know how many consulates the State Party had abroad, particularly in countries with large numbers of Mauritanian migrant workers, what the ratio was in those countries of consulate staff to the number of migrant workers and members of their families, and what mechanisms were in place to allow Mauritanians abroad to vote in Mauritanian elections. He would appreciate information on the number of Mauritanian migrant workers who returned to the State Party, the types of skills that they brought back with them and the types of new businesses, if any, that they opened on their return.

The meeting was suspended at 4.55 p.m. and resumed at 5.25 p.m.

37. **A representative of Mauritania** said that the new 2026–2030 action plan for the National Migration Management Strategy was an expanded and improved version of the one that had been implemented during the period 2021–2025. The national action plan to combat the smuggling of migrants was in place and covered the period 2026–2028.

38. Migrants arrested in Mauritania fell into two categories: those who entered the country illegally, without passing through one of the country's 82 official border posts, and those

rescued at sea while attempting to reach Europe. After their initial reception by the Mauritanian coast guard or navy, rescued migrants received immediate assistance from the National Agency on Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants, in the presence of representatives of the International Organization for Migration (IOM). A pre-screening conducted by the Agency, in accordance with standard operating procedures, yielded data on the numbers of children, vulnerable persons, and men and women among the migrants. Standard operating procedures were also followed in sending migrants to reception centres. Unaccompanied children, vulnerable persons and pregnant women were accorded special treatment. A determination would be made as to the migrants' status – and, consequently, as to whether they should be deported or provided with a temporary residence permit – during a later, more thorough screening. In the case of migrants taken to reception centres, a 15-day period was allowed for the making of such a determination.

39. The National Human Rights Commission and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) could conduct monitoring visits at the reception centres at any time and were able to assess the conditions of the migrants' arrest, accommodation and, where applicable, deportation. Migrants could register complaints through a hotline and two platforms run by the National Agency on Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants and the National Human Rights Commission.

40. A special protection mechanism was in place for unaccompanied migrant children, and the Ministry of Social Affairs, Children and the Family worked closely with the Agency and IOM in implementing it. Family tracing procedures could be triggered under the mechanism. Unaccompanied migrant children were systematically referred to the Centre for the Protection and Social Integration of Children.

41. When returns were carried out at border posts, the migrants in question were escorted to the border post of the neighbouring country and handed over to the security forces present at that post. Barring a situation of smuggling of migrants, illegally entering the country, through the bypassing of border posts, constituted a minor offence. There were no detention centres for migrants in the country. Even migrants in an irregular situation were accommodated at reception centres. If a decision was reached to deport a migrant, the migrant was neither imprisoned nor fined. Although some 146,000 persons had taken advantage of the opportunity offered in 2022 to regularize their status, many had, unfortunately, failed to apply for renewal in subsequent years.

42. As Mauritania was a multi-ethnic country renowned for its hospitality, the allegations that migrants were treated differently according to their skin colour or religion were surprising. Migrant workers in a regular situation had the same rights as Mauritanian nationals in terms of employment, social protection and healthcare. Access to public education was guaranteed and available, without discrimination, to national and non-national children at the preschool, primary and university levels. The right of migrants and members of their families to establish or join a trade union was guaranteed. Cooperation agreements were in place with various institutions to facilitate the transfer of funds abroad.

43. The Government hoped to soon have more detailed statistics regarding Mauritanian migrants abroad. The large majority of Mauritanian migrants abroad, except those in the United States of America, were there in a regular situation. Migrants living abroad were entitled to participate in Mauritanian elections, directly elected four members of parliament to represent them – one each for Africa, Europe, Asia and Oceania, and the Americas – and could have dual nationality. Bilateral and multilateral agreements had been concluded to facilitate the movement of Mauritanian migrants, including a memorandum of understanding with Spain, a bilateral agreement with Senegal and a joint declaration with the European Union.

44. The country's agreements with the European Union were clear and transparent. Mauritania did not act as a gendarme for the European Union. While the agreements provided for the return of non-nationals to Mauritania if it was shown that they had departed from the country, no non-national had ever been returned to Mauritania from the European Union.

45. **A representative of Mauritania** said that the dedicated reception facilities for migrants in Mauritania included both the reception centres for migrants in an irregular situation and the newly established temporary reception centres for migrants rescued at sea,

which provided protection to migrants who were victims of people smuggling. Complaint mechanisms run by the National Agency on Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants and the National Human Rights Commission were in place at the temporary reception centres, and the Commission and OHCHR could both carry out unannounced monitoring visits at those centres. Unaccompanied children were not taken to the new centres; rather, following pre-screening, they were sent directly to the Centre for the Protection and Social Integration of Children, which was present throughout the country. The Agency, in coordination with the regional offices of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Children and Families and IOM, decided on the protection measures to be put in place, in the light of the best interests of the child, and the unaccompanied or separated child was then referred to an authorized entity providing accommodation and supervision in line with international standards. In each case, the Agency prepared a detailed report and shared it with the authorities and partners concerned.

46. The national referral mechanism, which had been established pursuant to an order of the Prime Minister, was an effective tool that allowed the Government to identify and assist victims of smuggling of migrants and both nationals and migrants who were victims of trafficking in persons. The fund for aid and assistance to trafficking victims benefited both Mauritians and migrants living in Mauritania.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.