

# Mauritania factfile



400km

WESTERN  
SAHARA

SAHARA

ATLANTIC OCEAN

MAURITANIA

■ Nouakchott

SENEGAL

MALI



■ With a population of 3.4m, Mauritania has suffered more than 10 coups or attempted coups since gaining independence from France in 1960

■ **2005: Gen. Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz** masterminds coup, ending 21-year dictatorship of President **Maaouya Sid'Ahmed Ould Taya**

■ **2007: Sidi Ould Cheikh Abdallahi** (*above*) wins nation's first democratic presidential election. Abdallahi angers Aziz supporters by opening dialogue with Al Qaeda-linked extremists

■ **Dec-Feb 2008:** Attacks by Islamic extremists leave seven people dead, including four French tourists

■ **Aug 6:** Aziz mounts bloodless coup after Abdallahi sacks several top army officers