Operational Context

Algeria has been hosting refugees from Western Sahara since 1975. These refugees are in camps in the harsh and isolated desert environment of western Algeria, where opportunities for self-reliance are limited, forcing them to depend on humanitarian assistance for their survival.

The 2018 decentralised evaluation of the nutrition activity recommended that WFP clarify its role in nutrition and improve intersectoral coordination. The 2018 Food Security Assessment confirmed the dependence of the Sahrawi camp population on food assistance; 30 percent of the population is food insecure, while 58 percent is vulnerable to food insecurity. Only 12 percent of the Sahrawi population is food secure.

The 2019 nutrition survey indicated a deterioration of women’s and children’s nutritional status. The global acute malnutrition (GAM) among children of 6-59 months increased from 4.7 percent in 2016 to 7.6 percent. The anaemia prevalence among children 6-59 months is 50.1 percent, and 52.2 percent among women of reproductive age.

WFP currently represents the main regular and reliable source of food for the Sahrawi refugees in Algeria. Upon the request of the Algerian Government, WFP has been present in the country since 1986.

Operational Updates

- WFP distributed food rations to 133,672 Sahrawi refugees in March 2020. The food basket consisted of 8 kg of wheat flour, 2 kg rice, 2 kg barley, 1 kg of lentils, 750 g sugar, 1 L of vegetable oil and 500g of corn soy blend. The food basket was complemented with 1kg of gofio, roasted maize funded by the Spanish region of Gran Canaria, which enabled WFP to increase the average kilocalorie value of the reduced ration, reaching 2,039 kcal/day, 97 percent of the planned value.

- For the treatment of Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) and anaemia in pregnant and lactating women (PLWGs), WFP distributed 21 daily rations of super cereal, sugar and vegetable oil to 695 women. WFP did not have enough corn soy blend to cover the full month of distributions. In addition, around 8,000 PLWGs received fresh food vouchers to prevent MAM and anaemia.

- For the treatment of MAM in children, 438 children aged between 6-59 months received 29 daily rations of 100g of specialised nutritious food.

- WFP distributed mid-morning snacks in all schools and kindergartens to over 39,000 boys and girls. Due to the COVID-19 crisis all education institutions in the camps closed on 13 March and will probably remain closed until June.

COVID-19 response in Algeria

- On 26 February Algeria reported its first confirmed case of COVID-19. Since then, the number of cases has increased, and the Algerian Government has taken measures to slow the spread including closure of schools and restaurants, halting air and maritime travel, prohibiting public gatherings, stopping movement between wilayas (regions) and requesting citizens to stay home. All wilayas are on partial lockdown, except the most affected region, Blida, which is fully locked down. Nine wilayas have a curfew between 3pm and 7am, including Algiers.

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Photo Caption: WFP vehicle in the Tindouf refugee camps ©WFP/Katharina Meyer-Seipp
**WFP Country Strategy**

**Interim Country Strategic Plan (mid-2019-mid-2022)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Requirements (in USD)</th>
<th>Allocated Contributions (in USD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>59 m</td>
<td>25 m</td>
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<tr>
<td>2020 Requirements (USD)</td>
<td>Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD) (May – October 2020)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 m</td>
<td>0 m</td>
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</tbody>
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**Strategic Result 1:** Everyone has access to food

**Focus area:** Crisis response

**Activities:**
- Provide general food assistance to targeted food-insecure refugees in camps near Tindouf.
- Provide nutrition-sensitive school feeding.
- Provide refugees with complementary livelihood opportunities that benefit women and men equitably.

**Strategic Result 2:** No one suffers from malnutrition

**Focus area:** Crisis response

**Strategic Outcome #2:** Targeted Sahrawi refugees in camps near Tindouf have improved nutrition status by 2022

**Activities:**
- Provide children aged 6–59 months and pregnant and lactating women and girls with assistance for the treatment and prevention of moderate acute malnutrition.
- With the COVID-19 crisis further evolving in late March, WFP took measures to continue life-saving activities (general food assistance, nutrition) and suspending or adapting its other activities (school feeding, complementary activities, monitoring). WFP staff are working from home.
- As member of the UN Crisis Team and the UN Task Force on the “socio-economic impact of COVID-19”, WFP is advocating for an assessment of the economic effect of the pandemic, its impact on the food security of vulnerable populations and food systems, as well as a compensation plan and safety nets for those that are adversely impacted.

**COVID-19 response in refugee camps**

- There are no confirmed cases in the Tindouf refugee camps and the Algerian town of Tindouf. The camp leadership is responsible for the response to the crisis in the camps in coordination with UN agencies. A COVID-19 emergency committee was created that includes the refugee organization Media Luna Roja Saharauí (MLRS), local health authorities and other actors.
- On 18 March, the camp leadership closed the checkpoints and stopped movement to and from the camps. All schools in Tindouf are closed since March 13 until the end of the school year in June. Sensitization campaigns on COVID-19 have been launched by the camp leadership.
- WFP staff in Tindouf currently work from home. WFP currently has limited access to the camps and is exploring remote monitoring options.

**WFP COVID-19 mitigation measures**

- WFP is preparing a joint appeal with UNHCR, UNICEF and the NGO community working in the Tindouf refugee camps to mobilize resources to fight the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the refugees.
- Life-saving activities (general food assistance and nutrition support) will continue in the coming months. Other activities (school feeding, complementary activities) are halted.
- WFP revised the Food and Cash-based Transfer Distribution Standard Operating Procedures to minimize the risk of exposure of WFP personnel, partners and beneficiaries by avoiding overcrowding at distribution points, direct physical contact and increasing hygiene measures.
- WFP is adapting its monitoring approach and shifting to remote monitoring, while access to camps and beneficiaries is limited. WFP will also remotely monitor the market to see if prices change and what implications this may have on assistance provided through cash-based transfers.
- WFP accelerated the local purchase of basic commodities like wheat flour, pasta, barley and vegetable oil to reduce transport times and ensure that enough food is available in the camps to cover needs for the next months.

**Planned activities cancelled due to COVID-19**

- Exhibit of complementary activities (fish farm, H2Optimal and H2Grow hydroponics) at 3rd Environment and Renewable Energies International Fair in Algiers 9 -11 March.
- Donor mission to the camps 21 – 24 March.
- Series of Social Behaviour Chance Communication (SBCC) workshops for partners in Tindouf.

**New contributions**

- WFP welcomes a contribution by ECHO amounting to EUR 5.3 million for general food assistance.

**Donors**

- Andorra, Brazil, ECHO, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Switzerland, USA, flexible funding, Choithrans and Mastercard