



WFP Timeline: Six decades fighting hunger

1961: The World Food Programme is created as an experiment to provide food aid through the UN system. It soon proves its worth, responding to multiplying hunger crises.

1973: The first airdrops targeting Africa's drought-stricken Sahel. WFP coordinates more than 30 cargo aircraft from 12 national forces – as well as camel trains – to feed 25 million people.
Today, WFP is responding to another Sahel emergency, fueled by armed conflict, climate change and widespread poverty.

1962: WFP's first aid operation after a September earthquake in Iran kills more than 12,000 people. WFP swings into action, delivering to survivors 1,500 tons of wheat, 270 tons of sugar and 27 tons of tea.

1984: Ethiopia suffers its worst famine in a century. Distressing images prompt world public opinion to mobilize with events such as Live Aid and Band Aid. WFP delivers two million tons of food in relief operations over two years.

1963: WFP launches a development operation in Sudan and delivers its first school meals to 5,000 youngsters in the West African nation of Togo to encourage school attendance. WFP has since become the world's largest school feeding provider, reaching millions of young pupils with healthy snacks and meals – even as it works to hand over the programmes to government ownership.

1989: Operation Lifeline Sudan is launched. Leading a consortium of UN agencies and charities alongside UNICEF, WFP releases 1.5 million tons of food in airdrops above war-torn and drought-afflicted regions of what is now South Sudan. The 20-aircraft, three-sorties-a-day operation remains the largest humanitarian airdrop in history.

1994: Rwanda's genocide kills more than 800,000 people. Today, WFP continues to support the conflict-displaced and recent returnees – from Rwanda, neighboring Burundi and **the Democratic Republic of Congo**, where WFP responds to a separate conflict-fueled emergency.

2005: WFP begins shifting away from food-only assistance, first via vouchers that people can redeem for food in selected shops, boosting local economies. By 2010, WFP is distributing vouchers to Iraqi refugees in Syria, and cash to Kenyans – all via mobile phone. Three years later, Syrian refugees in Lebanon receive WFP's first E-cards.

2013: Conflict breaks out in the world's newest country, **South Sudan**, which has claimed thousands of lives and uprooted millions. **Famine is declared in several areas in 2017.** From the start, WFP has delivered food and nutrition assistance to the most vulnerable.

2020: The Covid-19 pandemic upends the world as we know it, deepening poverty, hunger and malnutrition among the most vulnerable. WFP adapts its operations to minimize the impact on the roughly 138 million people it plans to assist this year.

- **December 10: WFP receives the Nobel Peace Prize** for its efforts to fight hunger – and the use of food as a weapon in conflict – and for bettering conditions for peace.
- **Meanwhile, fears of famine stalk conflict-torn areas of four countries: Burkina Faso, northeast Nigeria, South Sudan and Yemen.**
- **Worldwide, nearly 700 million people – 60 percent in conflict-affected countries – go to bed hungry.**

2000: WFP establishes its first hub, in Brindisi, Italy, to disperse emergency items for aid operations. Other hubs follow, helping to transform WFP into the logistics backbone for UN agencies and NGOs.

2011: Syria's conflict begins, unleashing a massive humanitarian crisis continuing to this day. So does WFP assistance, reaching roughly 4.5 million in Syria monthly, and hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries.

2015: Conflict escalates in **Yemen, today the world's largest humanitarian crisis.** WFP's response is also our largest anywhere – aiming to provide 13 million people with monthly food assistance.

2003: The **WFP-operated Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS)** is born. It now flies hundreds of thousands of humanitarian and lifesaving cargo yearly to some of the world's most challenging locations – where other viable transport options don't exist.

2011: Somalia tips into famine, triggered by drought but intensified by insecurity and conflict. Within a year, WFP feeds 1.5 million people in a broader Horn of Africa emergency response.

2018: The **UN Security Council recognizes the link between hunger and conflict** for the first time. WFP hails the move as a crucial step in breaking a deadly cycle.