



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES



WFP Mauritania Country Brief November 2020

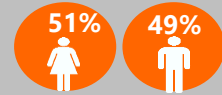
In Numbers

562 mt of food assistance distributed

USD 1 m cash-based transfers made

USD 20 m six months (December 2020-May 2021) net funding requirements

173,538 people assisted in November 2020



WFP SAYS NO to GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

Operational Context

Mauritania is a lower middle-income country in the Sahel with a population of 4.6 million that lives over a vast but mostly arid 1,030,700 km² territory.

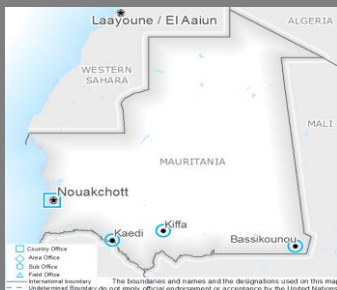
Mauritania is exposed to recurrent cycles of drought, resulting in the degradation of natural resources and structurally affecting reproductive capacity, resilience and food security of the population. According to the November 2020 *Cadre Harmonisé*, 409,940 people faced crisis food insecurity between June and August 2021.

After an initial period of relative calm, Mauritania is now among the Sahel countries with the fastest acceleration of COVID-19 prevalence and highest relative prevalence (850 cases per million).

Mauritania continues to host the first largest number of Malian refugees in West Africa. By mid-2020, the number of refugees registered in Mbera camp had reached 60,880. Most of the refugees are unlikely to return to their homes in the near future.

Under the crisis response tag, WFP country portfolio aims to meet the basic food and nutrition need of crisis affected people as well as to provide UNHAS flight services for all humanitarian and development partners. In parallel, WFP strives to ensure the continuation of resilience programmes, while strengthening institutional capacity and minimizing gender inequalities

WFP has been present in Mauritania since 1964.



OPERATIONAL UPDATES

- **Lean season response** ended in November 2020. A preliminary appraisal of WFP's drought-response activities indicates the positive impacts of the response provided from May to September in the regions of Tagant and from June to November in Guidimakha, Assaba, Gorgol and Hodh El Charghi. According to several assessments (2019/2020), these regions are characterized with highest prevalence of food insecurity and malnutrition. A total of 147,667 people (63 percent of the general CSP target) received cash transfers as part of the general food distributions, including 16,400 girls, boys and pregnant and lactating women (PLWs) who also received fortified blended foods to prevent malnutrition.
- **Nutrition activities** for the treatment of acute malnutrition treatment (MAM) reached 24,515 people in six regions. In parallel, WFP continued its intervention in Nouakchott health centres, assisting 1,840 children and 266 PLWs.
- Through the **school feeding programme**, 13,969 Mauritanian children received a morning porridge and a hot lunch.
- Cash distributions for **asset creation activities** (FFA) took place in November, reaching 3,102 households. WFP organised preliminary sessions to carry out 14 community-based participatory planning exercises in Guidimakha and Assaba regions, in order to assess community needs and discuss and agree on priority areas and activities for the next months.
- In **Mbera refugee camp**, WFP reached 58,880 individuals (99 percent of the target) through general food distributions. However, due to important funding constraints, WFP was forced to continue providing a reduced hybrid food ration composed of 150 gr of rice, 12 gr of oil and 2,5 gr of salt and a cash component of MRU 250 (around USD 7), covering only 57 percent of the 2,100 kilocalorie target. In total, 474 mt of rice, 37 mt of oil, 7 mt of salt and USD 0.8 million were distributed. November distributions were coupled with those of December due to the preventive measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19. MAM treatment activities reached 505 children and 262 PLWs with lipid-based nutrient supplements (1,572 mt distributed). A total of 22 children were newly admitted; 200 children and 35 women were healed and discharged, while 386 children and 261 women remained in the programme to continue treatment. In parallel, malnutrition prevention activities reached 1,822 children and 814 women with 23 mt of Super Cereals. A total of 4,991 children and 824 women were newly screened. Among them, 38 percent of children and 99 percent of women are found in need of nutrition activities. WFP also distributed a morning porridge to 4,738 school children, an increase of 14 percent compared to previous month, confirming how school canteens represent a source of motivation and attraction for the children at school. As part of capacity strengthening activities, WFP trained 108 school canteens managers.

Population: **4.6 million** (UNFPA 2020)

2018 Human Development Index: **161 out of 189**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

Chronic malnutrition: **19.6% of children between 6-59 months**

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Main photo: Credit: PAM/Bechir Maloum

Caption: FFA beneficiary working a half-moon asset

Country Strategic Plan (2019-2022)

2020 Total Requirement (in USD) - after budget revision	2020 Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
49.7 m	43.7 m	20 m

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 1: Crisis-affected people, including refugees, are able to meet basic food and nutrition needs during and in the aftermath of crises.

Focus area: Crisis response

Activities:

- Provide food/cash assistance (conditional and/or unconditional), school meals, and preventive nutrition ration and MAM treatment to refugees
- Provide food assistance and supplementary feeding to pandemic affected populations/households.

Strategic Result 2: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 2: Food-insecure populations, including school-age children, have access to adequate and nutritious food all year.

Focus area: Resilience-building

Activities:

- Provide seasonal food assistance to food-insecure Mauritanian populations, including malnutrition prevention and treatment
- Provide school meals to vulnerable Mauritanian children

Strategic Result 3: No one suffers from malnutrition

Strategic Outcome 3: Nutritionally vulnerable populations, including children and pregnant and lactating women and girls, have improved nutritional status all year.

Focus area: Resilience building

Activities:

- MAM treatment and cash transfers to pregnant and lactating women and girls attending pre/post-natal care

Strategic Result 4: Improved food security and nutrition of smallholders

Strategic Outcome 4: Food-insecure populations and communities exposed to climate shocks have more resilient livelihoods and sustainable food systems all year.

Focus area: Resilience-building

Activities:

- Provide livelihood support to food-insecure and at-risk Mauritanian households, including the development or rehabilitation of natural and productive assets

Strategic Result 5: Country strategic capacities

Strategic Outcome 5: National institutions have strengthened capacities to manage food security, nutrition and social protection policies and programmes, including an adaptive (shock responsive) social protection system, by 2030.

Focus area: Resilience-building

Activities:

- Provide training and technical support to government institutions

Strategic Result 6: Global partnership support

Strategic Outcome 6: Humanitarian and development partners have access to common services that permit them to reach and operate in targeted areas all year.

Focus area: Resilience-building

Activities:

- Provide flight services to humanitarian partners, towards humanitarian interventions
- Provide on-demand logistics services to Government, United Nations and Non-Governmental partners to facilitate effective field operations (CPA Service Provision and platform activities)

- The United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (**UNHAS**) transported 143 passengers and 347 kg cargo in November, connecting Nouakchott-Kiffa, through over 28 in-country rotations. Moreover, flights to and from Bassikounou completely resumed starting from 30 November.

- WFP continued to provide **logistical support** to Government and partners as part of COVID-19 national response. It consists of the reception, transport and dispatch of items as well as storage in the warehouse.

- WFP took part in the visit of **UNICEF regional director** in Assaba region. The mission allowed to show the results jointly achieved by the two agencies in resilience convergence sites, where WFP FFA, malnutrition, school feeding and lean-season activities are coupled with UNICEF WASH activities, community health strengthening, nutrition activities and protection services. The complementarity between these community-based, demand-driven activities is key to build a scalable resilience building model in a long-term perspective

- WFP and FAO organized a regional workshop in Selibaby to present the joint **UN Peace Building Fund** (PBF) project to regional authorities, technical services, NGOs, UN agencies and civil society organizations. The workshop was an occasion to highlight the objectives, expected results, and the implementation approach of the activities funded, with the aim to ensure the mobilization of all and a solid ownership of the interventions

- WFP inaugurated a **new field office** in Selibaby city, Guidimakha region, where most resilience activities are carried out. This will allow WFP to strengthen its operational presence in the field to closely follow-up the activities.

- WFP engaged in the annual campaign on the **16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence** (GBV). This year campaign focuses on the following theme: **FUND, PREVENT, RESPOND, COLLECT!** Various activities were organized to raise awareness on GBV among WFP staff.

MONITORING

- Data collection of the gender-COVID-19 survey was completed. WFP will analyse and disseminate the results to better understand the impact that COVID-19 has on women, girls, men and boys and other vulnerable groups.

- WFP planned a post distribution monitoring in December in Mbera refugee camp, after more than six months of reduction in assistance. This will likely provide a more realistic assessment of the situation of food and nutrition status of refugees.

CHALLENGES

- USD 20 million are urgently needed for WFP operations in Mauritania for the next six months. This includes the assistance to Malian refugees and support to on-demand logistics services to the Government and partners.

- WFP continues its advocacy efforts to mobilize funds for the assistance to Malian refugees. If resources are not immediately secured, a complete interruption of assistance is expected in the first quarter of 2021. This would have devastating consequences on already weakened households, in this area marked not only by food insecurity but also instability. USD 4 million is urgently required to cover Q1 2021 needs.

DONORS

Donors to WFP Mauritania in 2020 include European Commission, France, Germany, Japan, Monaco, Saudi Arabia, Spain, United Kingdom and USA. Additional support has been provided by UN CERF and UN Peace Building Fund.