



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES  
CHANGING LIVES

# WFP Mauritania Country Brief

August 2021



## Operational Context

Mauritania is a lower middle-income country in the Sahel with a population of 4.8 million that lives over a vast but mostly arid 1,030,700 km<sup>2</sup> territory.

Mauritania is exposed to recurrent cycles of drought, resulting in the degradation of natural resources, and structurally affecting productive capacity, resilience, and food security of the population. According to the March 2021 *Cadre Harmonisé*, 484,150 people are projected to be food insecure between June and August 2021 (lean season).

Mauritania experienced two waves of the COVID-19 pandemic, and a third wave began in July 2021. Mauritania began its COVID-19 vaccination campaign in March 2021. As of 9 September 2021, 285,121 people (6.3 percent of the population) received at least one dose of a vaccine against COVID-19 and 21,545 people are fully vaccinated (0.5 percent of the population).

Mauritania continues to host the largest number of Malian refugees in West Africa. The Malian refugee situation entered its ninth years and the security conditions in Mali remains volatile, resulting in a continuous refugee influx to Mauritania. As of July 2021, 65,800 refugees were registered by UNHCR in the Mbera camp.

As part of crisis response activities, WFP country portfolio aims to meet the basic food and nutrition needs of 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.



Population: **4.8 million**

2019 Human Development Index: **157 out of 189**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

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

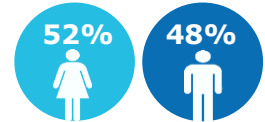
## In Numbers

**208 mt** of food, including specialized nutritious food distributed

**USD 1.9 m** cash-based transfers made

**USD 7 m** for six months (September 2021 – February 2022) net funding requirements

**165,810 people assisted** in August 2021



## Operational Updates

- Whilst WFP priority continues to be increasing the coverage and adequacy of social protection system, through the crucial May-October period, when people's food stocks run out and market prices are the highest, WFP steps in helping the most vulnerable communities, by providing monthly cash transfers to vulnerable families, allowing them to put food on the table and protect their livelihoods. In August, WFP distributed the second cycle of **cash assistance**, coupled with malnutrition prevention programme, to the most food insecure populations in Assaba, Hodh El Charghi, Guidimakha and Gorgol regions, reaching a total 58,646 households.
- In **Mbera camp**, August general food and cash distributions were coupled with July distributions (63,599 people reached). In parallel, WFP reached 1,073 PLWGs with prevention of malnutrition activities (7 mt of fortified food distributed). However, children aged 6-59 months could not be assisted due to operational constraints. Overall, 422 children and 190 PLWGs were reached by treatment of malnutrition activities (3 mt of food distributed). The remedial summer courses have not yet started.
- **School feeding activities** were not implemented due to the closure of schools for the summer break. **Nevertheless**, WFP is working to finalize the identification of schools eligible for school feeding activities in the next school year.
- As part of **food assistance for assets** (FFA) activities, the first mission to take aerial photographs by drone for territorial diagnoses and monitoring of activities was carried out in Guidimakha, Hodh El Charghi, and Assaba. In addition, WFP launched tree planting activities for the first time in Mauritania, in Guidimakha and Assaba region. The activities target four sites and 13 hectares. Approximately 7,600 trees are being planted. Several environmental benefits will result from this activity.
- As part of the integrated resilience package, WFP implemented **malnutrition treatment activities** benefitting 13,440 children and pregnant and lactating women and girls (PLWGs) in the regions of Guidimakha, Gorgol, Tagant, Assaba and Hodh El Charghi. WFP undertook a field mission in Tagant to monitor the implementation of the activities.

**Contact info:** Maria Ludovica Carucci ([marialudovica.carucci@wfp.org](mailto:marialudovica.carucci@wfp.org))

**Country Director:** Kinday Samba

Further information: <https://www.wfp.org/countries/mauritania>

**Main photo:** Credit: WFP/En Haut !

**Caption:** Half-moon technique in Gvava, Assaba

## Country Strategic Plan (2019-2022)

2021 Total Requirements (in USD)	2021 Available Contributions (in USD)	Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
39.6 m	38 m	7 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 crisis.

**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 governmental 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 for 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)

- With the aim of strengthening governmental capacities to manage food-security, nutrition and social protection policies and programmes, WFP continues to work for the establishing of a national preparedness and response scheme. In August, the decrees for the establishment of the Technical Steering Committee (TSC) and its technical support unit (TSU), which will ensure the functionality of the **National Scheme for Prevention and Response to Food and Nutritional Crises**, are in the process of finalization.

- In August, the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (**UNHAS**) transported 132 passengers and over 492 kg of light cargo connecting Nouakchott to Kiffa and Bassikounou, through 35 in-country rotations.
- As part of WFP's annual capacity strengthening plan, **gender training sessions** were held at WFP field offices of Kaedi, Bassikounou and Kiffa to improve the knowledge and the understanding of WFP staff and partners of gender-sensitive approach and tools for programme activity planning, implementation, and monitoring.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

- The **SWG (Specialised Working Group) mission** in charge of monitoring the agropastoral campaign made its first field visits and the analysis of the data is ongoing.
- WFP partner INFOLOG continues to collect data on food security and regularly shares a report on the collection. The snapshot information is accessible in real time through this link: [Hunger Map LIVE](#).
- Preliminary results from the **August 2021 SMART survey** indicated that 21 out of 44 departments in seven regions (including Assaba, Hodh El Charghi and Guidimakha) have severe acute malnutrition rates above the emergency threshold of 2 percent. At the national level, the global acute and chronic malnutrition rates among children 6-59 months are 11 percent (of which 1.9 percent have severe acute malnutrition) and 17 percent respectively.
- According to the **August meteorological bulletin**, the amount of rain during the period from May to August 2021 was slightly lower than the average situation for this time of the year. Despite this, heavy rainfalls were recorded over Assaba, Guidimakha, Gorgol, Brakna and Trarza during the period.

## Challenges

- Regarding **assistance to Malian refugees**, WFP urgently needs critical funding from September 2021 to continue providing food and nutrition assistance to an estimated 66,450 Malian refugees for the next six months. While maintaining reduced rations, WFP will be able to continue providing food and nutrition assistance to the most vulnerable people until 31 December 2021. Hence, if no contributions are confirmed urgently, WFP will be forced to completely suspend general food distributions (both cash and in-kind food portions) to refugees starting from January 2022.

## Donors

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