



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM
AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

WFP Mauritania Country Brief November 2023

STOP

In Numbers

132,509 people assisted
in November 2023



385 mt of food distributed in November 2023

US\$ 885,000 cash transferred in November 2023

US\$ 4.6 M six-month (December 2023-May 2024)
net funding requirements

Operational Context

Mauritania is exposed to recurrent drought cycles, resulting in the degradation of natural resources, and structurally impacting the population's productive capacity, resilience, and food security. According to the November 2023 Cadre Harmonisé, 364,799 individuals in 13 regions will face crisis conditions (Phase 3+) during the peak of the lean season (June-August 2024). This represents 8 percent of the population and reflects a decrease of 48 percent compared to November 2022.

Mauritania continues to host the largest number of Malian refugees in West Africa. The security conditions in Mali have been volatile for ten years, resulting in a continuous refugee influx into Mauritania. As of October, there were 87,899 refugees registered by UNHCR in and around the Mbera camp.

WFP country portfolio aims to meet the basic food and nutrition needs of affected people and 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 minimising gender inequalities. WFP has been present in Mauritania since 1964.



Population: 4.8 million

2021 Human Development Index: 158
out of 191

Income Level: Lower middle

Chronic malnutrition: 24.8 percent of
children between 6-59 months

Operational Updates

WFP's refugee response in the Mbera camp: WFP delivered cash assistance to 65,922 highly vulnerable refugees (36,059 women), with a ration of MRU 450 (US\$ 12) per person and provided 553 children aged 6-59 months (259 girls) with specialized nutritious food to **manage moderate acute malnutrition**. As part of its **school meals programme**, WFP provided breakfast each day to 6,709 primary school children (3,301 girls) enrolled in seven schools across the camp.

2023 lean season response: WFP took part in a brainstorming retreat with the main members of the *National Food and Nutritional Crisis Response Mechanism's (DCAN)* central bodies and its partners. The retreat provided an opportunity to assess the current operation of the DCAN, draw lessons for improving its functioning, and revise its legal texts where necessary. The meeting aimed to examine the system in a participatory and inclusive manner and to strengthen consultation, joint advocacy, and coordination between the various components of the mechanism.

As a result of the lessons learned, a drafting committee will be appointed for the assessment and a technical committee at the end of the reporting process to monitor the progress of action points and ensure all recommendations are implemented.

School meals programme: WFP provided two warm meals per day for 50,186 schoolchildren in 391 schools in Assaba, Guidimakha, and Hodh El Chargui regions.

Treatment of moderate acute malnutrition: WFP provided specialized nutritious foods to 5,643 children aged 6-59 months (3,009 girls) and 1,282 pregnant and breastfeeding women.

Capacity-strengthening: On 21 November, as part of its renewed commitment to support the government's efforts to achieve long-term development objectives, WFP signed a partnership agreement with the Ministry of Social Affairs, Children, and the Family (MASEF) to formalise their collaboration in several priority areas (social protection, empowerment of women, and prevention of malnutrition). The agreement will come into force in 2024, run until 2028 and will include an annual work plan.

Gender: November marked the start of the **16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence** (GBV) campaign under the theme of: "Investing to prevent violence against women and girls". WFP participated in the official launch event on 25 November under the leadership of MASEF and alongside various UN agencies. On 6 December, the Country Office organised a **panel discussion** on nutrition and gender with the participation of the Resident Coordinator and UN agency colleagues. The panellists included the first female psychiatrist and first female lawyer in Mauritania as well as a civil society leader who founded an NGO for mother and child health and a shelter for survivors of GBV.

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Photo Caption: 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign
WFP/ Bechir MALUM

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

Country Strategic Plan (2019-2023)

Total Requirements (US\$)	Total Received (US\$)
286.5 million	195.3 million
2023 Requirements (US\$)	Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in US\$) (December 2023 – May 2024)
70.1 million	4.6 million

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 a 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: No one suffers from malnutrition

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: Improved food security and nutrition of smallholders

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

Focus area: Resilience-building

Activities:

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

Strategic Result 4: Food systems are sustainable

Strategic Outcome 4: Food-insecure populations and communities exposed to climate shocks in targeted areas 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 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

On 8 December, UNFPA was invited to present the National Framework on GBV to all WFP staff to raise awareness of the framework. Moreover, from 1 to 9 December, the Bassikounou, Kaedi, and Kiffa sub-offices conducted a series of **awareness-raising workshops** on the topic. On 6 December the Kiffa sub-office held a **cooking competition** led by male staff members to initiate meaningful conversations around gender disparities and to raise awareness on gender and nutrition. WFP Mauritania launched a **digital media campaign** on its **social media platforms**, featuring staff portraits, testimonies, and videos to raise awareness of GBV.

The United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) transported 125 passengers connecting Nouakchott to Kiffa, Nema, and Bassikounou through 28 in-country rotations.

Monitoring

The results of the **November 2023 Cadre Harmonisé** are available [here](#). Acute food insecurity in Mauritania has slightly improved, with an estimated **364,799 people (or 8 percent of the total population) facing crisis conditions or worse** (Phase 3+). High levels of humanitarian needs are expected to persist through 2024. Compared to the figures from the November 2022 *Cadre Harmonisé*, the percentage of households in the crisis phase decreased from 13 percent to 8 percent, which can be explained by the good harvest for both rainfed crops and crops harvested between November and December 2022. This was reflected in the level of food consumption. The drop in the percentage of households in the crisis phase would have been greater if inflation had not remained high.

Challenges

A funding shortfall is expected at the end of January 2024, which will result in a **suspension of assistance for the Malian refugee in the Mbera camp** until further funding is received. The number of new arrivals continues to rise, with approximately 12,808 new arrivals in 2023. Estimates point to an additional 100,000 refugees arriving in Mauritania and residing in the Hodh El Chargui region over the next six months. This influx puts further **pressure on already scarce resources and sparks fear of tensions** with the host population. WFP is therefore advocating for urgent resources to assist Malian refugees.

UNHAS operations will come to a halt in January 2024 unless further resources are secured before then. The current funding shortfall for 2024 is **US\$ 3.5 million**.

Donors

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