



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES



WFP Mauritania Country Brief February 2024

In Numbers



124,386 people assisted

260 mt of food distributed

USD\$ 725,964 cash transferred

US\$ 37.1 million six-month net funding requirements
(February-July 2024)

Operational Context

Mauritania is exposed to recurrent drought cycles which have degraded natural resources and structurally impacted its productive capacity, resilience, and food security. According to the November 2023 *Cadre Harmonisé* analysis, 364,799 people in 13 regions will face crisis conditions (IPC 3+) during the peak of the lean season (June–August 2024). This represents 8 percent of the population and 48 percent compared with November 2022.

Mauritania hosts the largest number of Malian refugees in West Africa as Mali's volatile security conditions during the last decade led to a continuous influx of refugees. As of December, 100,807 refugees were registered by UNHCR in and around the Mbera camp.

WFP's country portfolio aims to meet the basic food and nutrition needs of affected people and provide UNHAS flight services for humanitarian and development partners. In parallel, WFP strives to ensure continuation of resilience programmes, while strengthening institutional capacities and minimising gender inequalities. WFP has been present in Mauritania since 1964.



Population: 4.8 million

2021 Human Development Index:
Ranked 158th out of 191 countries

Income Level: Lower-middle

Chronic malnutrition: 24.8 percent of
children aged 6 to 59 months

Operational Updates

- Refugee response at the Mbera camp:** In February, WFP delivered cash assistance to 64,801 people (35,446 women), including 2,197 new arrivals. WFP provided 469 children aged 6 to 59 months (236 girls) and 292 pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls with specialized nutritious food to **manage moderate acute malnutrition**. Through its **school meals programme**, WFP provided daily meals to 7,522 primary school children (3,647 girls) enrolled in 8 schools in the camp.
- 2024 lean season response:** Pending results of the March *Cadre Harmonisé* analysis WFP plans to intervene in the Barkeol moughataa (department) this lean season. WFP participated in and contributed to working sessions of the Specialised Technical Committee of the **National Food and Nutritional Crisis Response Mechanism** (DCAN, in French), leading preparations of **food assistance** and **safety nets** for the 2024 response.
- School meals:** In February, WFP served **two hot meals per day** to 50,126 children (391 schools) in Assaba, Guidimakha, and Hodh El Chargui regions. Activities also focused on preparations for Mauritania's involvement in the **African Day of School Feeding** and the presentation of the National School Feeding Programme (PRONAS, in French) document in March. This included finalising the **pre-positioning of food supplies** and **ventilation in schools**, conducting evaluation missions to **energy pilot sites**, and assisting the Ministry of Education in submitting commitments to the **School Meals Coalition**.
- Food assistance for assets (FFA) programme:** In February, WFP hosted two missions to Assaba. A joint WFP–UNICEF mission by the UN Resident Coordinator and the Ambassador of Germany to Mauritania visited resilience activities in Gvave Gurjuma, Gvava Peuhl, and Worty. Recommendations for improvements were made, including the strengthening of links between WFP, UNICEF and the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) via activities that will operationalise the nexus, increased involvement of communes in implementation of activities and facilitation of access to microcredit for village cooperatives. WFP also hosted a technical mission with UNICEF and the Head of Cooperation of the German Embassy to Mauritania. Two resilience sites were visited at Gvave Gurjuma and Worty, to assess activities and the effectiveness of targeting of vulnerable populations, the ownership of the development techniques by the communities, and the support from regional authorities. It was recommended to consolidate activities' achievements through innovative actions that will enhance cooperation between government agencies, United Nations agencies and other partners.

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Country Strategic Plan (2019- February 2024)

Total CSP Requirements (US\$)	Total Received in 2024 (US\$)
286.5 million	29.9 million
2024 Requirements (all year) (US\$)	Six-Month Net Requirements (US\$) (February- July 2024)
82.8 million	37.1 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, preventive nutrition and moderate acute malnutrition 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 statuses 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
- Provide on-demand logistics services to Government, United Nations, and Non-Governmental partners to facilitate effective field operations (CPA Service Provision and platform activities)

• **Treatment of moderate acute malnutrition:** In February, WFP provided **specialized nutritious food** to 2,231 children aged 6 to 59 months (1,072 girls), and 763 pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls, with a 99 percent recovery rate. Other activities included training sessions for auxiliaries in Barkeol that focused on **active screening, acute malnutrition treatment**, and utilisation of the **Nut4health tool**. WFP, UNICEF, Action Against Hunger (ACF, in French) and World Vision reviewed the WFP-UNICEF regional hot spot analysis based on trends from Food Security Monitoring Systems (FSMS) and Harmonised Framework data.

• **Capacity-strengthening:** WFP and UNHCR convened a joint meeting at the Mbera camp to reflect on the establishment of a social protection roadmap, with focus on social registration, health, and economic inclusion. The Government and WFP participated in a workshop to configure the African Risk View modelling tool to prepare for the upcoming winter insurance season. WFP continued to support the Government as it developed its 2024 National Response Plan (NRP).

• **Gender:** WFP commenced reinforcement of knowledge regarding gender-based violence, protection against sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), and sexual harassment for staff, support personnel, and cooperating partners. Capacity-building sessions will continue through the end of April 2024. A PSEA mission was also organized in WFP's sub-offices in order to meet recipients of WFP assistance, various stakeholders, and to map out organizations working within gender and protection sectors in WFP's intervention areas.

• The **United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS)** transported 95 passengers, connecting Nouakchott to Bassikounou, Kiffa and Nema via 18 in-country rotations.

Monitoring

• A market functionality analysis was conducted in Hodh El Chargui in preparation for an emergency response to the refugee influx. The humanitarian situation was updated via a targeting exercise as this region was affected by insecurity in neighbouring Mali, and a continuous flow of refugees and returnees. A baseline study (scheduled for March) will be published for the mobilization of additional resources. The Harmonised Framework session in March will update the food security situation, with notes on population movements, price increases and malnutrition. These results will inform the 2024 lean season response plan.

Challenges

• A funding shortfall by the end of March is likely, which would result in a **suspension of assistance for Malian refugees in the Mbera camp**. The number of refugees in Hodh Chargui rose to 107,273 with 5,625 awaiting registration and residing in/outside the Mbera camp. This influx further pressured already scarce resources and sparked tensions with host populations. **WFP is advocating for urgent resources to assist Malian refugees as it faces a US\$ 20.4 million funding shortage** for its refugee assistance package.

• **UNHAS operations will cease in mid-March 2024 without secured funding.** The 2024 **funding shortfall is US\$ 3 million.**

Donors

Donors to WFP Mauritania's CSP 2024–2028 include Andorra, Austria, Czechia, the European Commission, France, Germany, the Republic of Korea, Mauritania, Monaco, Norway, Spain, Finland and the United States of America. Additional support was provided by African Risk Capacity and United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund.