



World Food Programme

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

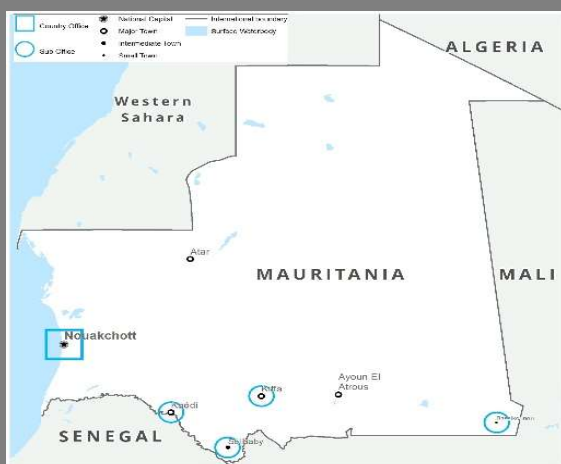
WFP Mauritania Country Brief March 2024

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 March 2024 Cadre Harmonisé analysis, 656,652 people will face crisis conditions (IPC 3+) during the peak of the lean season (June–September 2024).

Mauritania hosts the largest number of Malian refugees in West Africa, due to ongoing conflict in neighbouring Mali. As of February 2024 ([UNHCR dashboard](#)), 109,000 refugees were registered in and around the M'bera Refugee Camp as well as across the Hodh El Chargui Region.

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



Population: **4.9 million**

2022 Human Development Index:
Ranked 164th out of 193 countries

Income Level: **Lower-middle**

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

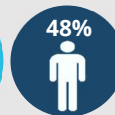
In Numbers

118,088 people assisted

194,776 mt of food distributed

US\$ 7,796,60 cash transferred

US\$ 36.4 million six-month net funding requirements (April–September 2024)



Operational Updates

Refugee response in the M'bera Refugee Camp: In March, WFP delivered cash assistance to 67,871 people (of which 35,446 were women), including 766 new arrivals. WFP provided 56 children aged 6 to 59 months (of which 25 were girls) with specialized nutritious food to **treat moderate acute malnutrition**. Through its **emergency school meals programme**, WFP provided daily meals to 7,522 primary school children (of which 3,647 were girls) enrolled in eight (8) primary schools in the camp.

The March 2024 *Cadre Harmonise* projects for the **Lean Season 2024** a deteriorating food insecurity situation with regards to 2023. Some 656,652 people, representing 14.33 percent of the national population, are projected to experience food insecurity during the 2024 lean season. In the Hodh El Chargui region alone, some 92,800 people are expected to face crisis-level food insecurity (Phase 3).

Integrated Resilience Package

School Feeding: In March, WFP served **two hot meals per day** to 50,217 children (of which 25,595 girls) in 391 schools in Assaba, Guidimakha, and Hodh El Chargui regions. Activities also focused on the preparation for the National School Feeding Programme (PRONAS) workshop planned in April. Further, on 7 March, WFP joined hands with the Government and other partners to celebrate the Africa Day of School Feeding in Dar Naim (Nouakchott), shining a light on the transformative impact of school meals programmes.

Treatment of moderate acute malnutrition: WFP provided specialized nutritious food to 2,796 children aged 6 to 59 months (1,315 boys and 1,481 girls), and 585 pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls.

Food assistance for assets: From 13 February to 6 March, a technical review mission was undertaken to asset creation sites in the department of Kiffa to support WFP's cooperating partners in monitoring the quality of the community assets under construction. These include half-moons and stone cordons; water reservoirs (small hydro-agricultural dams), which will help to improve food crop production; fencing to protect crop fields from animal grazing; a dozen water boreholes to support women's cooperatives in developing vegetable gardens.

Capacity-strengthening: Following the results of the Cadre Harmonise March 2024 analysis, WFP, the National Food Security and Nutrition Shock Prevention and Response System

Contact info: Farah KASHAF (farah.kashaf@wfp.org)
Country Director: Kinday SAMBA
Further information: www.wfp.org/countries/mauritania

Photo Caption: African School Feeding Day celebrations in Dar Naim (Nouakchott)
WFP/ Bechir MALUM

Country Strategic Plan (2019-2024)

| Total CSP Requirements (US\$) | Total Received in 2024 (US\$) |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| 417.6 million | 28.5 million |
| 2024 Requirements (all year) (US\$) | Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (US\$) (April– September 2024) |
| 82.8 million | 36.4 million |

Strategic Result 1: People are better able to meet their urgent food and nutrition needs.

Strategic Outcome 1: Crisis-affected populations in targeted areas, including women and children in need of nutrition support, are better able to meet to their urgent needs immediately before, during and after shocks.

Focus area: Crisis response

Activities:

- Provide refugees with an integrated package of assistance including food, school meals, nutritional support for the management and prevention of malnutrition
- Provide nutritionally adequate assistance to crisis-affected populations in the form of cash assistance for food security and nutrition-specific purchases

Strategic Result 2: People have improved and sustainable livelihoods.

Strategic Outcome 2: Communities vulnerable to shocks in targeted areas have sustainable livelihoods, access to basic services, strengthened human capital, reinforced markets, improved nutrition and resilience to climate shocks by 2028

Focus area: Resilience-building

Activities:

- Provide integrated resilience support to communities vulnerable to shocks and strengthen institutional capacities at the local and national levels, including linkages to national social protection programmes

Strategic Result 3: National programmes and systems are strengthened.

Strategic Outcome 3: By 2028, national institutions have strengthened capacity to establish a robust, effective, and adaptive social protection system, which includes school-based programmes and nutrition and food security policy.

Focus area: Root Causes

Activities:

- Provide technical support to improve the capacity of government institutions to build a social protection system that adequately addresses food security, nutrition and shock response

Strategic Result 4: Humanitarian and development actors are more efficient and effective.

Strategic Outcome 4: Government partners and humanitarian and development actors support vulnerable people effectively and efficiently throughout the year

Focus area: Crisis Response

Activities:

- Provide air transport services and technical assistance for humanitarian and development partners
- Provide on-demand services at the request of the Government and other partners, in addition to technical assistance

(DCAN) and other partners have adjusted their positioning for the 2024 National Response Plan (NRP), which is still under validation. WFP will be focusing on the Kankossa departments in the department of Kiffa while the Government, French Development Agency, World Bank and INGO-Action Contre la Faim will support response assistance in other areas.

Gender: In March, WFP conducted gender, age, and protection consultations in the far-east Bassikounou department and M'bera Refugee Camp. The analysis seeks to inform the planning, implementation, and monitoring-evaluation of emergency food assistance through cash transfers, for new arrivals outside the camp and for certain host community households. Further, the consultations aimed to recognise protection trends and risks, including gender-based violence (GBV), faced by the affected populations. The results, once ready, will be used to identify and implement preventive and mitigating measures during WFP's interventions.

The **United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS)** transported 92 passengers, and 178 kg of cargo connecting Nouakchott to Bassikounou, Kiffa and Nema via 19 in-country rotations.

Monitoring

The situation in food markets, despite adequate supply levels, is characterized by continued inflation, with sharp rises in the prices of the main basic products compared with the five-year average for 2018-2022. Poor rainfall levels experienced during the 2023 rainy season in tandem with persistent high prices of essential foodstuffs are beginning to have an impact on the food and nutritional situation of a large part of the population. Through select surveys, WFP is observing households resorting to the use of negative consumption and livelihoods-based coping strategies in order to make ends meet. The nutrition situation also remains worrying. The most recently available data (2022 SMART) noted a national GAM prevalence rate of 11.6 percent, with several departments experiencing crisis to emergency malnutrition.

Challenges

UNHAS operations will cease in mid-May 2024 if funding is not secured urgently. The 2024 **funding shortfall is estimated at US\$ 3.32 million.**

A funding shortfall for general food assistance to refugees via cash transfers is expected by the end of September. This would result in a **suspension of cash assistance for vulnerable Malian refugees in the M'bera Refugee Camp.** WFP is thus advocating for urgent resources, as it currently faces a **US\$ 15.1 million funding shortage** for its refugee assistance package. Similarly, the **Integrated Resilience Package** is facing a shortfall, with an estimated deficit of **US\$ 4.6 million for the latter half of 2024.**

Donors

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