



World Food Programme

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WFP Djibouti Country Brief

May 2025



Operational Context

Djibouti is a small country, positioned at the gateway to the Horn of Africa and the Gulf of Aden. With a population of 1.1 million, an estimated 23 percent of the population of this low-middle income country lives in extreme poverty. In the 2024 Global Hunger Index, Djibouti was ranked 92 out of 127 countries with a severity score categorized as serious.

Djibouti's hot, dry, and low annual rainfall (130 mm) limit agricultural production which contributes just three percent to its Gross Domestic Product. As a result, the country imports 90 percent of its food, making it highly dependent on international market prices. Price fluctuations affect purchasing power of low and middle-income rural and women-headed households, who spend 77 percent of their income on food.

Preliminary results of the 2025 food security assessment indicate that 230,000 persons (about 20 percent of the population) will face crisis and emergency levels of food insecurity (IPC 3 and above) from July to December 2025. Malnutrition levels remain high with Global Acute Malnutrition spiking at 14.7 percent among children aged under five, compared to 13 percent in 2023. WFP's operations in Djibouti aim to improve food and nutrition security for the most vulnerable people including refugees, asylum seekers, and rural communities with limited access to resources. WFP also works with the Government of Djibouti on strengthening social protection programs and capacity in the transport and commodity handling sectors for humanitarian and development actors. WFP's operations are aligned with the national strategy, Vision 2035, which promotes food security and nutrition, as well as the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2025-2030.



Population: 1.1 million

2023/2024 Human Development Index: 171 out of 193

Income Level: Lower middle

Chronic malnutrition: 31 percent of children between 6-59 months

In Numbers

75,372 people assisted in May

213.1 mt of in-kind food distributed

USD 427,593 cash-based transfers

USD 12.3 million net funding requirements (June to - November 2025)



Operational Updates

- In May, WFP delivered food and nutrition assistance to 75,372 people, reaching 53 percent of its planned target. WFP's assistance included emergency response, nutrition programmes, and initiatives to strengthen community resilience.

Lifesaving food and nutrition assistance (Crisis response)

- WFP distributed unconditional food assistance to 22,200 refugees and asylum seekers in Ali-Addeh, Holl-Holl, and Markazi refugee settlements. In-kind assistance comprised 114 metric tons (mt) of wheat flour, pulses, and fortified oil. Additionally, WFP transferred USD 106,514 to complement their food basket.
- As part of its emergency response to support vulnerable, food-insecure nationals affected by shocks, WFP distributed 394 mt of mixed food items to 12,240 individuals. General food distributions were organized in 55 localities of rural areas across the country.
- Additionally, WFP provided unconditional cash-based transfers (CBT), amounting USD 243,000, to 21,800 vulnerable people (4,300 households) facing acute levels of food insecurity in the main towns of the five regions (Ali Sabieh, Arta, Dikhil, Obock, and Tadjourah). The CBT amount is aligned with the national safety net programme, providing DJF 10,000 (USD 56) per household. This amount helped families buy essential food items from local markets to meet their immediate food needs.
- As part of its lean season response, WFP assisted 12,640 people across the country with 406 mt of assorted commodities.

Resilience building

- Through the Fresh Food Voucher initiative, 1,230 vulnerable urban households were able to access nutritious food from local markets. Implemented with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Solidarities and the Ministry of Health, the initiative targeted vulnerable households with pregnant or breastfeeding women and/or a child under two. WFP transferred USD 104,200, of which USD 34,900 was specifically allocated for purchasing fresh and nutritious food, such as meat, poultry, fruits, and vegetables, from WFP-contracted retailers, thereby also supporting local markets.

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WFP/Neuvieme Djibouti. Leirman, a WFP-contracted trader at Riyad market (Djibouti) explains the outcome of the Fresh Food Voucher initiative on her activity.

Country strategic plan (2020 - 2025)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
132.4 m	94.4 m	12.3 m

Strategic Result 1: Access to food (SDG Target 2.1)

Strategic Outcome 1: Refugees, asylum seekers and shock affected populations in the Republic of Djibouti have access to adequate and nutritious food throughout the year.

Focus area: Crisis Response

Activities:

1. Provide food assistance and nutrition services, including nutrient rich food and nutrition education and counselling to refugees and asylum seekers living in settlements.
2. Strengthen government capacity and support national responses for shock affected populations through contingency plan

Strategic Outcome 2: Food insecure Djiboutians in targeted regions and refugees have improved access to food and improved nutrition status by 2025.

Focus area: Resilience Building

Activities:

3. Provide food, cash-based transfers and technical assistance to strengthen a national inclusive, adaptive and nutrition-sensitive social protection system that contributes to enhanced economic integration.
4. Provide malnutrition prevention and treatment, cash-based transfers, nutritious food, counselling nutritional and incentives for targeted populations, while supporting national nutrition programmes

Strategic Result 8: Enhance Global Partnership (SDG Target 17.16)

Strategic Outcome 3: Authorities and local partners have enhanced capacity to support the humanitarian community in the Horn of Africa throughout the year.

Focus area: Crisis Response

Activities:

5. Provide supply chain services to the humanitarian community (on a full cost-recovery basis)

- To support the national school feeding programme, WFP continued to provide technical assistance to the government. In May, the WFP provided cash-based transfers to 68 gardeners who maintain school gardens. Each received bi-monthly USD 113 as an incentive for their work. The amount is aligned with the national safety net programme and provided to save on travel time and costs linked to redemption of the voucher at WFP-contracted retailers. The food produced from these gardens is directly consumed in schools, contributing to improved nutrition and learning outcomes for students.

Nutrition

- Under its nutrition response, WFP allocated 90 mt of specialised nutritious food to 60 health centres in the country. The centres reached 4,595 children under the age of five, as well as 2,720 pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls with nutrition support to manage moderate acute malnutrition.

Supply Chain

- As part of its regional procurement strategy aiming to increase the purchase of food commodities locally and injecting cash into local economies, WFP procured 613 mt of vegetable oil from Golden Africa Djibouti Sarl. The consignment was shipped by sea to the port of Mombasa, Kenya, for onward distribution in support of humanitarian operations in South Sudan.
- WFP handled 7,852 mt of cargo. Of this, 5,677 mt comprising sorghum, yellow split peas, and vegetable oil were transported to Ethiopia using both WFP fleet and commercial trucks. Additionally, 213 mt of commodities were delivered to partners as part of the general food distributions. The remaining quantities are stored at the Humanitarian Logistics Base to support WFP operations in Djibouti and across the region through the Global Commodity Management Facility.

United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS)

- WFP supported the operations of the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) in the region, facilitating the safe transport of 825 passengers from 19 UN agencies and 51 international Non-Government Organizations. The team coordinated 50 flights operated by UNHAS Yemen, connecting seven destinations - including five within Yemen: Aden, Marib, Mukalla, Sana'a, and Seiyun. Additionally, UNHAS successfully transported 560 cargo shipments, ensuring timely delivery of critical humanitarian supplies to their final destinations.

Monitoring

- WFP participated in the 2025 annual Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysis, collaborating with other UN entities and national partners. The findings from this joint assessment are expected to be released in early June and will inform future humanitarian response efforts.

Challenges

- WFP **urgently requires USD 12.3 million** to continue critical assistance to people facing acute levels (IPC Phase 3+) of food insecurity across the country.
- Without urgent additional support, WFP's food assistance risks being suspended by September 2025. This will leave thousands of vulnerable families without critical food support, pushing them deeper into hunger and food insecurity.