



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES



WFP KENYA COUNTRY BRIEF FEBRUARY 2026

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Food security in Kenya deteriorates with nearly 3 million people in IPC 3 and above, expected to increase further to 3.7 million between April to June.
- 60 percent of the refugee population are in IPC 3 or above (429,500 people).
- The current drought response efforts with IRA support are reaching 160,300 people in IPC 4 in four counties with 3-months assistance (in kind and cash transfers)

IN NUMBERS



1.7 million people assisted in January 2026



46%
Male



54%
Female



8,007 mt food distributed



USD 3M cash transferred



USD 56.9M (March – August 2026) net funding requirements

Photo Caption & Credit: In Tana River County, Ismail watches helplessly as one of his cow's collapses, a stark reminder of the toll drought took on families and their livestock. WFP/Dennis Matendechere.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

- The Kenya Food Security Steering Group's Short Rains Assessment [indicates](#) a sharp decline in food security across the country. The number of people requiring humanitarian assistance has nearly doubled since August 2025, rising from 1.8 million to 3.3 million (in IPC 3 and above), expected to increase further to 3.7 million between April to June.
- The crisis now affects a wider area, with the number of counties in IPC 3 tripling from three to nine. In addition to Turkana, Marsabit and Mandera, Samburu, Isiolo, Wajir, Garissa, Tana River, and Kwale have slipped into IPC 3.
- The nutrition situation in northern Kenya has reached alarming levels. Several counties, including Garissa, Isiolo, Wajir, Marsabit (Laisamis and Loyangalani), Samburu, Turkana North (Kibish), Turkana West, Turkana Central (Loima), and Baringo (Tiaty), are currently classified under IPC Acute Malnutrition Phase 4 (Critical). Conditions have worsened further in Mandera, North Horr, and Turkana South and East, which have now deteriorated to IPC Phase 5 (Emergency). This crisis has left approximately 810,000 children under the age of five acutely malnourished, alongside 116,000 pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls.
- Around 429,500 refugees in Dadaab, Kakuma, and Kalobeyei, representing 60 percent of the refugee population, are in IPC Phase 3 or above (243,000 in Phase 3 and 186,500 in Phase 4). Dadaab has the largest number of people affected, while Kakuma and Kalobeyei are proportionally the hardest hit.

OPERATIONAL UPDATES

Drought Response: Reaching the most vulnerable

- WFP is delivering emergency food assistance across four counties with populations in IPC Phase 4 — Wajir, Mandera, Turkana, and Tana River — reaching 160,300 people with three cycles of support between January and March 2026, covering 50 percent of minimum food basket needs. The first cycle started in January: cash transfers in Wajir and Mandera, and in-kind food distributions in Turkana and Tana River. The remaining two cash transfer cycles will be disbursed together, followed by a combined food distribution in March.
- Targeting was community-led, prioritizing households facing the highest nutritional and livelihood risk — including the elderly, the chronically ill, pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls, and households with malnourished children under two.
- A targeting validation mission confirmed the severity of food insecurity in drought-affected areas: 42 percent of respondents reported eating only one or two meals a day, 79 percent were restricting adult consumption so children could eat, and 92 percent were limiting meal sizes overall. Borrowing food or relying on relatives was widespread (89 percent), with loss of income and high food prices cited as the primary drivers. These findings underscore the critical importance of acting early.
- Following forecasts of severe drought, in September 2025, WFP, and the Government, activated an Anticipatory Action (AA) plan delivering drought early warning messages reached 460,000 people, three-month cash transfers to 64,600 people, and nutrition-sensitive top-ups to 17,200 children (6-24 months) and PBWGs before conditions deteriorated further.

Restoring Refugee Food Assistance to Near-Adequate Levels

- In 2025, severe funding shortfalls forced WFP to cut refugee food rations up to 32 percent of the minimum food basket — the lowest level ever recorded in Kenya's refugee operation. Thanks to donors' support, WFP increased rations for refugees in Dadaab, Kakuma, and Kalobeyei between February and September 2026, to 80 and 60 percent of the minimum food basket for category 1 (vulnerable) and 2 (limited ability to meet basic needs) and maintained 20 percent for category 3 (partially self-reliant). The Differentiated Assistance (DA) framework, which classifies refugee households

into four categories — from the most vulnerable to the self-reliant — and tailors ration levels accordingly, ensures that limited resources reach those with the greatest need first. While the increase marks a critical step toward adequate food assistance, sustained funding remains essential to maintain these levels beyond September.

Nutrition

Nutrition Drought Response

- In response to the worsening nutrition situation, WFP is planning to resume the supplementation of moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) in the seven most affected counties — Mandera, Turkana, Marsabit, Garissa, Wajir, Samburu, and Tana River — as well as in refugee operations. This assistance will target children under five and pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls.
- MAM supplementation in five of these counties was suspended since June 2025 due to funding constraints, with only 17 percent of the children in need receiving care. The new funding will restore essential services in high-burden areas, ensuring continuity of life-saving care, preventing further deterioration of nutrition status, and reducing mortality risks.

National School Meals Programme

- The National Council for Nomadic Education in Kenya (NACONEK) and WFP finalized their 2026 plans for school feeding in Garissa and Turkana Counties. These actions set clear goals and responsibilities ahead of the next National School Meals Coalition meeting. In parallel, NACONEK, WFP and county counterparts from Embu and Tharaka Nithi conducted an After-Action Review of the Home-grown School Feeding Aggregator Model, examining operational performance, cross-sector coordination, and early results from streamlining procurement through farmer cooperatives. Together, these exercises are building the evidence base for model refinement and structured scale-up, advancing a more systematic, government-owned national school meals architecture.

Social Protection

Advancing Kenya's Social Protection System: Key Milestones for KSEIP II

- WFP, UNICEF, the World Bank, and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) convened to review preparatory milestones for the Kenya Social and Economic Inclusion Project phase II (KSEIP II), marking the partnership's transition from foundational planning to a robust, impact-driven

implementation phase. With the current drought intensifying pressure on vulnerable households, the partners prioritized the integration of Anticipatory Action into the programme's design — embedding trigger-based financing mechanisms that deploy resources to protect household assets before climate shocks peak. KSEIP II will strengthen Kenya's adaptive social protection architecture, complementing existing investments with a faster, evidence-driven response capability that reaches those furthest behind.

Resilience and Livelihood Support Scaling Agripreneurship for Resilient Livelihoods in ASAL Counties

- The Farmer Service Centres (FSCs) Expansion Sprint Programme, led by WFP and implemented by local partner E4Impact, is strengthening agripreneurship and resilience across Kenya's Arid and Semi-Arid Lands by supporting rural enterprises—especially women- and youth-led businesses—through grants, mentorship, and market linkages. In January, 260 agripreneurs and 45 village savings and loans associations (VSLAs) received grant financing, and the partner has since rolled out intensive coaching, including one-on-one and group mentorship, climate-smart value chain guidance, and peer learning sessions within the Climate-resilient Food Systems hubs. This approach equips entrepreneurs with the financial resources, skills, and networks needed to grow sustainably, with a structured transition plan ensuring continued support through WFP's broader resilience programmes.

FUNDING OVERVIEW

Country Strategic Plan (2023-2027)



Until the rain comes: The cost of drought in Tana River



This drought does not arrive all at once. It unfolds quietly — in thinner livestock, empty farmlands, and dinner tables where meals grow smaller and less varied each week.

In Tana River County, livelihoods built on livestock and small-scale farming are buckling under repeated dry spells. Milk production has fallen. Casual farm labour has all but vanished. Food prices climb while livestock prices collapse, silently eroding the purchasing power of families who have little margin left.

These pressures converge at home, where parents make difficult daily calculations about who eats first and what can wait.

In Matanya Village, 25-year-old Kuresh Rage Farah knows this arithmetic well. A mother of three, she once earned a steady income as a farm labourer along the river, enough to feed her family three meals a day. Today, those farms sit idle. Meals are fewer. She is learning to cook sorghum for the first time, stretching what she has to feed her children and her 95-year-old grandmother.

Food assistance through the WFP drought response is helping families like hers hold steady, maintaining basic consumption while they wait for the rain.

"We just need help until the rain comes," Kuresh says. "When the farms start again, we will work. For now, we are managing with what we receive."

Donors:

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