



# WFP Mauritania Country Brief

## Highlights

- Erratic rain patterns in 2017 had a serious impact on the agropastoral campaign and 2018 prospects are worrying. WFP and partners conducted an independent analysis, while the Government is yet to coordinate with partners on a needs analysis and response.
- WFP continued supporting the national Zero Hunger Review (ZHR), which will be the foundation of WFP's operational strategy for the coming years in Mauritania.
- WFP distributed reduced rations as part of its monthly general food distribution to Malian refugees, because of resource shortfalls.
- UNHAS will have to halt its operations from January 2018 if USD 0.9 million is not urgently secured for the first quarter of 2018.

## WFP Assistance

Protecting livelihoods, reducing undernutrition, and building resilience through safety nets, asset creation and skills development	Total Requirements (in USD)	Total Received (in USD)	6-Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)*
PRRO 200640 (Jul 2014 – Dec 2017)	124.5 m	52.3 m (42%)	8.7 m

\*November 2017 – April 2018

**GENDER MARKER 2A**  PRRO 200640

Developed in consultation with the Government, United Nations agencies and NGOs, the Protracted Relief and Recovery Operations (PRRO) provides assistance to the most vulnerable and food-insecure people in Mauritania and protects their livelihoods. In 2017, as part of its operational and strategic review of activities, WFP will further focus on its various assistance components in convergent geographical areas and targeted households. WFP targets nearly 135,000 Mauritians living in rural areas with the highest food insecurity and malnutrition prevalence with: (i) food distributions using cash and in-kind transfers during the peak of the lean season; (ii) nutritional assistance to malnourished children and pregnant and nursing women; and (iii) food assistance for asset creation activities prior to and after the lean season period to help vulnerable communities and households strengthen their resilience to withstand future shocks.

WFP continues its assistance to some 52,000 Malian refugees in Mbera camp with: i) hybrid in-kind and cash distributions; ii) nutritional assistance for prevention of malnutrition and treatment of malnourished children and pregnant and lactating women; and ii) emergency school meals for children. Host communities living around Mbera are also assisted.

Country Programme Mauritania	Total Requirements (in USD)	Total Received (in USD)	6-Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)*
CP 200251 (Jan 2012 – Dec 2017)	77 m	9.2 m (12%)	2.3 m

\* November 2017 – April 2018

Under the Country Programme and in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, the school meals programme targets 73,000 children enrolled in public primary schools in six rural regions. After almost a yearlong suspension due to lack of funding, the school meals partially resumed in March in Hodh Ech-Charghi region for 16,908 students; however, there is no funding perspective for the school meals in the new school year.

Provision of Humanitarian Air Services in Mauritania	Total Requirements (in USD)	Total Received (in USD)	6-Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
Special Operation (SO) 200803 (Jan 2015 – Dec 2017)	12.4 m	8.1 m (65%)	1.8 m

The United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) established in 2012 at the request of the Humanitarian Country Team provides regular air services to aid workers, reaching six destinations in Mauritania. The service is essential to enhance operational and security capacity and facilitate humanitarian access from Nouakchott to the affected populations in remote areas.

## In Numbers

**1 million** food-insecure people in Mauritania

(Source: FSMS August 2017)

**226,500** planned people to be assisted in 2017, including **55,000** refugees, **135,000** local Mauritians and **36,500** schoolchildren

People actually assisted by WFP in October 2017  
**103,900**



## Strategic Planning

- WFP is leading efforts through the food security and nutrition sectors to strengthen the coordination between humanitarian/development partners in preparation of a harmonized response plan for 2018. The plan includes principles of integration between various sectors including food security, nutrition, WASH and health.
- As part of WFP's longer term goal to enhance the government's capacities in early warning and response mechanisms to shocks, WFP and the Food Security Commission (FSC) worked together to update the existing Africa Risk Capacity (ARC) contingency plans and customize the insurance policy to enhance the suitability of the index insurance to the local context.
- In the end of October, WFP participated in the national Zero Hunger Review (ZHR) consultation workshop held under the patronage of the Ministry of Economy and Finance. The event brought together a hundred representatives from national authorities, the private sector and donors, and development and humanitarian organizations around the common objective of identifying key national priorities for ending hunger by 2030 in terms of access to food, improved nutrition and sustainable food production.
- The joint WFP-UNHCR-*Commissariat à la Sécurité Alimentaire* (CSA) refugee household profiling continued in October with ACF. So far, 10,900 households were surveyed, representing 78 percent of the camp population. The exercise will be a key element informing the multi-sector and multi-year strategy for refugee self-reliance and host communities' resilience in Bassikounou.

## Operational Updates

### Relief and Recovery Operation – Refugee Component

- Due to in-kind pipeline breaks, WFP adjusted its mixed food/cash ration in October while guaranteeing refugees' daily kcal intake. Some 51,400 refugees were assisted with a reduced food and increased cash ration. Amongst them, 5,200 were young mothers and children receiving preventive and targeted supplementary nutrition assistance.
- The same ration is also planned for November and December distributions. WFP continues to be concerned that reduced rations will have a long-term negative impact on the food security and nutritional situation of refugees who exclusively rely on assistance to meet their basic food needs.
- WFP and UNHCR agreed on an ad-hoc distribution for some 800 refugees registered in ProGres level I. The individual monthly ration was composed of 7.5 kg of rice (250 g per day).
- WFP will resume the school meals programme in Mbera camp once schools reopen in November.

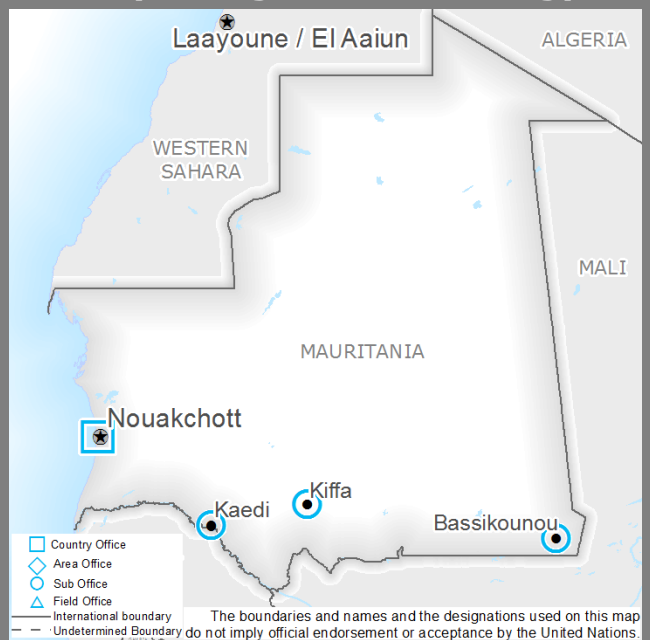
### Relief and Recovery Operation – Local Population Component

- In October, WFP provided the last seasonal assistance to vulnerable Mauritians in the regions of Assaba and Hodh Ech-Charghi due to delays encountered during the rainy season, which postponed distributions in some areas. WFP assisted some 34,600 individuals with general food distributions (cash in Assaba and in-kind in Hodh Ech-Charghi) integrated with blanket supplementary feeding for children aged 6 to 23 months and targeted supplementary feeding for children treated for moderate acute malnutrition.

### Special Operation – UNHAS

- UNHAS is considered a critical service by all humanitarian partners in Mauritania. However, UNHAS will be forced to stop all operations starting January 2018 if urgent funding is not received.
- In October, UNHAS transported 360 passengers (from 19 user organizations) and 1.15 mt of light cargo through 42 in-country rotations.

## Country Background & Strategy



Vast and largely desert, Mauritania is sparsely populated and is one of the world's poorest countries. Nearly 23 percent of the population lives below the poverty line on less than USD 1.25 per day (Human Development Report [HDR] 2015). Some 47 percent live in multidimensional poverty with acute deprivation in health, education and standard of living (HDR 2015).

Mauritania is exposed to recurrent cycles of drought resulting in degradation of natural resources and structurally affecting the productive capacity and resilience of populations. Over the past five years, food insecurity rates range from 25 to 30 percent during the lean season with significant regional disparities. Malnutrition rates are also high in children aged 6-59 months and above the WHO emergency threshold of 15 percent (SMART), especially during the lean season.

The protracted situation of Malian refugees in Mbera camp, although significantly improved since 2012, remains fragile and vulnerable to any reduction in food assistance. Seventy (70) percent of the refugees say they depend exclusively on food assistance for their daily food needs

In Mauritania, WFP combines resilience and crisis response interventions for the most vulnerable Mauritians (adults and children) living in Assaba, Gorgol, Guidimakha, Tagant, Hodh Ech-Charghi and Hodh el Gharbi, and Malian refugees living in Mbera camp to guarantee people's access to nutritious food all year around. The two components are overarching to WFP's capacity strengthening support to the Government, which aims at elaborating a national response scheme for food security and nutrition (currently not available in Mauritania).

WFP has been present in Mauritania since 1964.

Population: **3.5 million**

2015 Human Development Index:  
**148 out of 188**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

Chronic malnutrition: **31% of children between 6-59 months**

## Donors

Top five donors for **PRRO 200640**: USA (FFP), Japan, European Union (ECHO), Australia and France.

Top five donors for **CP 200251**: Private Donors

Top five donors for **SO 200803**: USA (BPRM), European Union (ECHO), and Spain.

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