



Limited income-generating opportunities and recurrent natural disasters like drought contribute to high levels of hunger in Mauritania, an arid country of 4 million people. Additionally, conflict in neighboring Mali has driven thousands of refugees, who face acute food needs, across the border.

**SITUATION**

- Many Mauritians depend on subsistence agriculture and pastoralism—activities susceptible to environmental shocks—as their primary livelihoods. June-to-August rainfall increased water and pasture availability, benefiting crop planting and improving the health and market value of livestock in parts of Mauritania. However, several consecutive seasons of insufficient and irregular rainfall have affected parts of southern Mauritania, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization. In these areas, dry conditions are disrupting plant growth and livestock production; forcing herders to migrate prematurely, which increases the pressure on pasture resources; and restricting affected households’ access to food, income, and water.
- After the 2012 coup and civil unrest in Mali, thousands of Malians fled to Mauritania, with persistent conflict continuing to drive new population movements into Mauritania. As of June, the UN reported that Mauritania hosted more than 59,000 Malian refugees, who largely rely on food assistance to meet their basic needs.
- Approximately 607,000 people—15 percent of the population—likely faced Crisis (Phase 3) or worse levels of acute food insecurity from June–August 2019, according to the March Cadre Harmonisé (CH) analysis.\* Additionally, a mid-2018 national nutrition survey found that acute malnutrition affected nearly 12 percent of children younger than five years of age, representing a high prevalence per UN guidelines and a slight deterioration compared to the previous year’s assessment.

\*The CH is a standardized tool used across West Africa that aims to classify the severity and magnitude of acute food insecurity. The CH scale, which is comparable across countries in West Africa, ranges from Minimal (Phase I) to Famine (Phase 5).



**FOOD FOR PEACE CONTRIBUTIONS**

TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS PER FISCAL YEAR (FY)

	U.S. DOLLARS	METRIC TONS*
FY 2019	\$7.5 million	3,254 MT
FY 2018	\$7.7 million	2,525 MT
FY 2017	\$6.4 million	2,090 MT

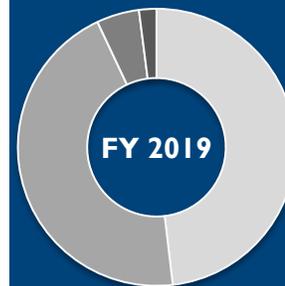
\*Metric tonnage does not reflect funding for vouchers or cash transfers

■ Cash Transfers for Food 48%

■ Local, Regional, and International Procurement 45%

■ Food Vouchers 5%

■ Complementary Services 2%



**RESPONSE**

- In collaboration with the UN World Food Program (WFP), USAID’s Office of Food for Peace (FFP) provides in-kind and cash-based food assistance to approximately 55,000 Malians living in Mbera refugee camp in southeastern Mauritania. FFP also supports WFP’s provision of specialized nutrition assistance to refugee children and pregnant and lactating women to prevent and treat acute malnutrition.
- FFP enables the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) to deliver ready-to-use therapeutic food to treat approximately 11,000 severely malnourished children countrywide through December 2020.
- Additionally, FFP partners with the non-governmental organization (NGO) Action Against Hunger (AAH) to provide cash transfers and food vouchers to highly vulnerable people affected by poor rainfall in southwestern Mauritania. The NGO also carries out nutrition and agriculture interventions to help families meet dietary requirements and strengthen their livelihoods.
- FFP also works with USAID’s Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance to jointly enable NGO Save the Children to distribute multi-sector assistance to vulnerable populations in southwest Mauritania.



PHOTO: USAID

**Photo:** Through a FFP-supported, AAH-managed food assistance activity, women in southwestern Mauritania’s Guidimakha Region work on building a gabion, which helps control erosion and rehabilitate arable land. In exchange for their work, they receive cash-based transfers to increase their access to food.