



WFP Central Sahel Situation Report

25 June 2021



Highlights

COVID-19 update

- As of 21 June 2021, [WHO](#) reported **33,318 confirmed cumulative COVID-19 cases in the Central Sahel countries**: Burkina Faso (13,468), Mali (14,381) and Niger (5,469). So far 884 people in the three Central Sahel countries lost their lives due to the pandemic (59 percent in Mali, 22 percent in Niger and 19 percent in Burkina Faso).

Lean season 2021 response

- In **Burkina Faso**, on 4 May, WFP issued an [advocacy note](#) on the lean season response, flagging urgent needs and related implications. WFP is aiming to assist **1.3 million people in Burkina Faso** during the lean season. However, due to funding shortfalls, reduced rations (by 50 percent) will be provided to beneficiaries. Those newly displaced due to the recent surge of attacks across the country will also be integrated in the response.
- In **Mali**, in preparation for the lean season assistance planned in June 2021 and also targeting **1.3 million people**, WFP organised training sessions for its partners on operational organisation of cash-based transfers (4-6 May). Funding was received in April to implement a new resilience project, aiming to reduce climate change impacts on the agricultural and pastoral production system in western Mali.
- In **Niger**, WFP is actively preparing the response for the lean season (April-August) targeting **680,000 beneficiaries** with unconditional cash and food distributions for a period of three months.

WFP urgently requires USD 340.2 million from July to December 2021 to carry out its planned lifesaving operations in the Central Sahel and pre-position relief items for the lean season.

WFP Net Funding Requirements (July-December 2021)

As of 17 June, 2021

Total Net Funding Requirements	USD 340.2 million
Burkina Faso	USD 148 million
Mali	USD 98 million
Niger	USD 94.2 million

In Numbers

14.4 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in Burkina Faso (3.5 m), Mali (7.1 m), and Niger (3.8 m). ([OCHA](#))

6.5 million people projected to be in severe food insecurity (2021 lean season).

7 million people targeted in 2021 by WFP under the Country Strategic Plans in Burkina Faso (2.6 m), Mali (1.4 m), and Niger (3 m) until end December 2021.

1.9 million people internally displaced (IDPs) in Burkina Faso (1.2 m), Mali (372,300), and Niger (300,320).

310,200 refugees in Burkina Faso (22,100), Mali (47,600), and Niger (240,500).

2.6 million vulnerable people were assisted by WFP and partners in April 2021 only, across Burkina Faso (873,000), Mali (369,400) and Niger 1.4 million beneficiaries in January 2021.

Situation Update

Security

- Persistent insecurity continues to affect the Central Sahel countries, mainly Burkina Faso and Niger. In **Burkina Faso**, a surge of major security incidents occurred since April in the Est and Sahel regions, including the killings of Burkinabe and foreign civilians (Est region), a targeted attack against a UN Vehicle (Sahel region), and an attack against the village of Solhan (Sahel region), costing the lives of over 130 people. The latter is the deadliest attack in Burkina Faso since 2015, and caused the displacement of over 13,600 people. In **Niger**, due to insecurity and NSAGs attacks, more than 12,000 people fled Anzourou *Commune* to seek refuge in Tillabéri city and the villages of Namari Goungou and Sakoira. A new *Note Verbale* that is expected to ease access was issued on 10 May, superseding that of 2 September 2020, which had affected all WFP Niger operations for eight months by comprehensively requiring military escort for all diplomatic and humanitarian travel outside of main city limits. Coordination efforts are underway to review the organization of field missions to ensure compliance with the new guidelines.

Political

- In **Mali**, Colonel Assimi Goita was sworn in as Mali's transitional President on 7 June, further to the arrest and forced resignation of the former transitional President Bah N'Daw and Prime Minister, Moctar Ouane. Goita named Choguel Kokalla Maïga as new Prime Minister for the Transition. Colonel Goita and Choguel Maïga committed to respect a transitional calendar which calls for elections by February 2022 and will not be candidates.



WFP Response

- In April 2021, WFP provided lifesaving and longer term resilience assistance to 2.6 million vulnerable people in Burkina Faso (872,801), Mali (369,377), and Niger (1.3 million), reaching over 100 percent of the planned beneficiaries (97 percent in Burkina Faso, 69 percent in Mali and 180 percent in Niger). WFP Niger reached more beneficiaries than planned under the rapid response mechanism (RRM) due to displacements in Tillabéri.

Crisis Response

- The majority of WFP's assistance in April was lifesaving response under WFP's crisis response activities, reaching over 100 percent of the 1.3 million vulnerable people targeted for the month in Burkina Faso (672,877) and Mali (191,624) and Niger (455,665).
- **In Burkina Faso**, the crisis response includes general food distributions to IDPs, host communities, and refugees, emergency school feeding activities and nutrition in emergency.
- Since March, food distributions have been based on WFP prioritization plan - which implies reduced rations due to funding constraints - and supported by the introduction of vulnerability-based targeting, i.e. targeting poor and very poor IDPs.
- WFP has now more regular access in hard-to-reach areas thanks to its access negotiation strategy. WFP managed to reach Mansila in April (one of the hotspot enclaved area in the Sahel region where 15,000 people are trapped due to the conflict), delivered nutrition products with UNICEF via UNHAS and managed to reach Foubé (Centre-Nord) in May to reach 35,000 people in dire need of assistance. WFP was also able to supply nutritional and school feeding activities in the locality of Pama (Est), where assistance was not provided since April 2020, through an alternative routing. A supply chain mission was carried out in early June to explore the opening of a new corridor from Lomé to the Komienga province (Est). The first deliveries are expected to start in mid-July.
- WFP integrated new displacements due to the recent surge of attacks across the country. Following the attack of Solhan on 5 June, WFP complemented the distribution undertaken by the *Action Sociale* in Sebba for the first month of assistance to IDPs, while planning further the response for the coming months based on needs assessment.
- **In Mali**, the crisis response includes general food distribution through CBT and a package of nutrition intervention (prevention and treatment of acute malnutrition and caretakers).
- Emergency food distributions for May 2021 were completed in northern and central regions of Mali. Cash-based transfers (CBTs) were provided to 155,500 men, women and children affected by conflict, climate change and socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19, to meet their food needs for one month.
- WFP is supporting the government's national response plan for the lean season targeting 1.3 million food insecure men, women and children between June and September 2021. WFP's distribution plan will include emergency response, social protection support and treatment of acute malnutrition for 600,000 people over three months. The operation is due to begin in late June through a joint approach and partnership using an integrated vouchers system in 12 convergent communes to maximise impact on beneficiaries.
- On 20 April, WFP and the *Commissariat à la Sécurité Alimentaire* (Ministry of Food Security) co-chaired a donors

meeting advocating together for an appropriate response to face increasing needs during the 2021 lean season.

- **In Niger**, crisis response activities include the provision of an integrated food/cash unconditional and nutrition assistance package for crisis affected people (refugees, IDPs, host communities and returnees) in areas recurrently affected by insecurity.
- In the framework of the pastoral lean season response (April-June), WFP is assisting 75,000 people with three months of unconditional food and cash distributions in the regions of Tahoua, Tillabéri, Zinder and Maradi over April to June. WFP is also preparing to assist 240,000 people during the agricultural lean season response (June-August) for three months, starting from the second half of June 2021. Adding the 365,000 beneficiaries under the protracted crisis and RRM response component, WFP targets a total of 605,000 beneficiaries for the rest of the lean season.

Nutrition Response

- As part of the non-emergency nutrition response, WFP reached 80,595 children and pregnant and lactating women and girls (PLWGs) for the prevention of acute malnutrition activities in Burkina Faso (45,316), Mali, (3,723) and Niger (31,556). This represented 61 percent of the beneficiaries targeted for prevention activities in April.
In Burkina Faso: nutrition activities were carried out both under the crisis response (nutrition in emergency) and regular nutritional portfolio.
- In May, in Bourzanga (Centre-Nord), WFP launched the first e-voucher distributions of a regional project for the Central Sahel further strengthening the links between nutrition and resilience activities. This assistance enabled displaced and host communities to procure locally produced nutritional products (for children aged 6-23 months and PLW/Gs) which are otherwise difficult to afford. WFP plans to extend this programme to other localities of the Centre-Nord and Sahel regions by the end of June.
- On 24 May, WFP initiated the census and malnutrition screening of children aged 6-23 months in the supported villages of Bani (Sahel region). Preparations are underway to provide children with specialised nutritious foods (Super Cereal Plus) to prevent acute malnutrition during the pastoral lean season (April - July). Those identified as malnourished will be referred to health centres for treatment. Moreover, WFP put in place additional mothers support groups, where awareness-raising, cooking demonstrations and screening for acute malnutrition take place every month.
- In **Mali**, a nutrition package for the prevention and treatment of acute malnutrition activities is included in the crisis response. Regular nutrition assistance activities include the prevention of stunting for children and cash for nutrition awareness for PLWG.
- WFP and its partners are updating the Minimum Expenditure Basket with data from the September 2020 National Food Security and Nutrition Survey (ENSAN). Analysis are underway and the first results will be available by end of June 2021. Part of the nutrition activity includes plans for monthly top up distributions targeting 13,931 that have been delayed until the start of the lean season (June 2021).
- In **Niger**, WFP nutrition unit worked with the nutrition unit of the *Cellule de Crises Alimentaires* (CCA) and the Nutrition Directorate (DN) to develop training documents and tools for the operationalization of infant flour distribution to children aged 6-23 months. From 31 May to 4 June, joint training sessions with WFP, CCA and DN were organized for the regional and departmental services of the *Dispositif National de Prévention et de Gestion des Crises Alimentaires* (DNP-GCA) and NGOs partners involved in the management

of lean season activities in the regions of Zinder, Maradi, Tahoua, Dosso, Tillabéri and Niamey. The objective of these training sessions was to strengthen the capacity of the main regional and sub-regional actors, to facilitate the active screening of malnutrition and the referral of cases and to strengthen the coordination mechanisms of blanket feeding operations in the field. In Maradi region, WFP observed a significant increase in malnutrition in health centres located in departments bordering Nigeria.

Resilience response

Under resilience activities, WFP provided support to 689,203 people in Burkina Faso (106,624), Mali (98,100) and Niger (484,479), reaching 94 percent of the beneficiaries targeted for resilience activities support in April.

- In **Burkina Faso**, as part of the resilience building of vulnerable populations, cash distributions were carried out to participants of asset creations activities in the Centre-Nord, Est, Nord, and Sahel regions for the first round of 2021.
- In **Mali**, FAO/UNICEF/WFP are working on the formulation of a joint proposal in line with the integrated resilience package currently implemented in the country. The submission is scheduled for late July.
- In **Niger**, a joint mission by WFP and the Ministry of Community Development was organized in Maradi and Zinder regions from 24 to 28 May to assess resilience activities integration, community and local authorities' ownership and the quality of the implementation. It also aimed to strengthen the vision and operationalisation of WFP's resilience approach in Niger, support the institutional dialogue at national level with governmental actors and university in the agricultural and environmental sectors, and provide recommendations to allow a better technical monitoring and management of the sites.
- WFP renewed its memoranda of understanding with the Ministries of Environment, Agriculture, Livestock and Hydraulics and with Universities for the technical monitoring and validation of FFA activities. Some 500,000 beneficiaries are targeted over a two-month period of lean season assistance, depending on the sites (newly targeted sites are planned to receive two months of assistance).
- During the reporting period, WFP reached more than 484,000 beneficiaries with food and cash distributions with FFA activities.

School feeding

- In April, WFP provided nutritious meals and take-home rations to 190,366 schoolchildren in Burkina Faso (47,984), Mali (75,930) and Niger (66,452), reaching 70 percent of the beneficiaries targeted for school feeding assistance.
- In **Burkina Faso**: In April, WFP provided hot meals and snacks to 131,930 boys and girls and dry take-home rations to 15,501 girls (to provide a nutritional incentive for girls to attend school). Emergency and regular school feeding activities took place in the Centre-Nord, Est, Nord, and Sahel regions. However, in the villages of Yattakou and Seytenga (Sahel region), nine schools assisted by WFP were closed further to an attack perpetrated on 26 April, resulting in the killing of 18 civilians.
- In **Mali**, on 26 April, UNICEF and WFP facilitated a field visit in Koulikoro for the European Union's Ambassador. Activities visited included school feeding, school gardens and a fish farming pool.
- In **Niger**, WFP is rolling out School-Connect, a digital tool for timely school feeding data collection and reporting, designed to help the Ministry of Education and WFP improve the performance of the programme. The pilot phase, launched in two steps – in eight schools in January and 42 schools in April – will end in June. Following the assessment of the pilot phase, WFP will further invest in School-Connect by strengthening synergies and complementarities with partners working in the education sector.

Assessments and monitoring

Assessments

- In **Burkina Faso**, WFP published the fourth edition of a [market bulletin](#), done jointly with the SONAGESS. Key outcomes indicate that: (i) the overall supply of cereal products remains below normal (compared to last year) and merchant stocks are decreasing; (ii) in the Centre-Nord, Est, Nord and Sahel regions, the drop in supply coupled with the increase in demand linked to the month of Ramadan led to a rise in prices; (iii) compared to last year, cereals have all recorded average increases of about 30 percent. High cereal prices reduce the access of poor and very poor households to staple food. Their food situation will therefore deteriorate sharply during the lean season; and (iv) in the outlook, the decline in market supply will continue overall with the increase in demand, especially in the Centre-Nord, Est, Nord, and Sahel regions. Cereal prices are expected to rise gradually through August and September but will be stable or slightly higher than in 2018.
- On 24 April, WFP conducted a multisectoral assessment in Mansila jointly with governmental counterparts and NGOs. Mansila is a locality in the Sahel region enclaved due to the conflict, where transport of food items by traders and the humanitarian community has been hindered in the last months. As outlined by the mission, the humanitarian situation of the population is critical and deteriorating. A high prevalence of acute malnutrition among children aged 6-59 months was noted, health workers have fled, and there is a total lack of nutritional and medical inputs. In coordination with UNICEF and via UNHAS, WFP delivered 3 mt of nutritional products to Mansila's health centre on 24 and 26 April. WFP is exploring different solutions to deliver food rations for larger-scale food distributions to affected populations.
- In **Mali**, the Market Functionality Index Assessment was conducted in April 2021 covering 13 markets in four regions (Mopti, Timbuktu, Gao, and Segou). Preliminary results show that the studied markets present adequate functionality and can absorb CBTs with adequate food availability and variety. A second round of data collection will be launched in June 2021 and will cover a larger number of markets in all regions of Mali. The results of this assessment will provide a better understanding of the market situation and will help in decision-making on the choice of transfer modalities for food assistance programmes. WFP and its partners are updating the Minimum Expenditure Basket with data from the September 2020 National Food Security and Nutrition Survey (ENSAN). The first results will be available by the end of June 2021.
- In **Niger**, given rising food prices, WFP continued to closely monitor market prices across the country, in partnership with the Agricultural Market Information System (SIMA). In addition to expanding the supporting of SIMA to collect market prices as part of its regular data collection, WFP also launched data collection for the Market Functionality Index (MFI), WFP's global market assessment methodology. The MFI will help refine the choice of modality (food or cash) and the cash transfer value. In May, data for the MFI was collected in 46 markets, and data will be collected in another 35 markets. Based on market monitoring and needs assessments, WFP Niger issued an operational guidance note indicating how it would adapt its transfer modality and cash transfer value according to specific price-increase thresholds. This note was shared with donors and partners.
- As part of the pastoral lean season response, a baseline survey was carried out in the regions of Tillabéri, Tahoua, Maradi, and Zinder. In total, a sample of 200 pastoral household beneficiaries were surveyed by telephone calls.

Monitoring

- In **Burkina Faso**, WFP undertook a Post Distribution Monitoring (mPDM) exercise during the month of May among IDPs who

benefitted from food assistance. Key outcomes are the following: (i) food consumption of WFP-assisted households improved between May 2020 and May 2021. Indeed, the proportion of households with an acceptable food consumption score (FCS) increased from 30 percent to 35 percent during this period, and the proportion of households with a poor FCS decreased from 30 percent to 9 percent; and (ii) the index of coping strategies has also changed positively in one year, i.e. from 16 to 7.

- In **Mali**, in May, WFP and its partners visited 325 sites, including 122 community health centres, 124 schools, and 47 local markets. Data analysis is ongoing, and the results will be shared before end of June 2021.
- In Ménaka, Mopti, Segou, and Timbuktu regions, the post-distribution monitoring (PDM) of general food distributions confirmed that IDPs received WFP's assistance through vouchers. Beneficiaries indicated that the products exchanged were of good quality and matched the value of their vouchers and their eating habits. The PDM also revealed that schools in Gao, Kidal, Segou, and Timbuktu received WFP funds for school meals. Some schools visited in Gao region were not functional due to insecurity.
- In **Niger**, Since the new *Note Verbale* was issued on 10 May, in addition to continuing its remote monitoring via phone calls as well as through third party monitors (TPMs), WFP was also able to resume in-person monitoring by Field Monitoring Assistants (FMAS). In May, over 90 locations across the country were monitored (distribution sites, schools, health facilities, FFA sites, community nutrition sites, smallholder support sites).

• Clusters and Common services

Food Security Cluster (FSC)

- In **Burkina Faso**, a workshop on the lean season planning and targeting was held from 21 to 22 April, bringing together the main actors of the lean season response including the Government, NGOs, FAO and WFP, as well as partners and donors. Its objective was to enable all stakeholders in Burkina Faso to work together to prepare assistance to vulnerable people during the 2021 lean season.
- **Burkina Faso** and **Niger** have been selected as pilots for the UN CERF's Anticipatory Action Funding Initiative. This funding will allow the Humanitarian Coordinator to request pre-positioned funds from CERF to implement pre-defined activities to reduce the impact of recurrent shocks that affect the population in both countries.

Logistics Cluster

- In **Burkina Faso**, the Logistics Cluster settled a second Mobile Storage Unit (MSU) in Kaya (Centre-Nord), which increases common storage capacity up to 907m². Four more MSUs are expected to be deployed: two in Fada N'Gourma (Est region) and two in Dori (Sahel region).
- The Logistics Cluster released its [Concept of Operations](#), which includes, amongst others, strategies to focus support and effort to the hard-to-reach areas.

Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC)

- In **Burkina Faso**, WFP has setup, configured, and activated highspeed wi-fi internet connection in Djibo (Sahel region) which is now running and benefits WFP partners and all humanitarian actors. This achievement represents the closure of the first phase of the internet

activation project in Djibo. The second phase will enhance the network functionality, including the possibility for user self-registration, authentication and authorization, and a voucher system for better reporting and accounting of the usage. Users will also benefit from a VHF radio security communication system connected to the Remote Security Operation Centre (RSOC) in Ouagadougou, for secure radio communication and tracking of movements.

- In **Niger**, the Telecommunications Security Standards (TESS) project for the migration from the Digital to Analog connectivity was implemented between 31 May to 1 June 2021. A total of 19 UN agencies received a technical training on radio programming to implement the migration. Between 2 and 4 June, the migration has been completed by the TESS team in Niamey and Zinder.



(UNHAS) UN Humanitarian Air Service

- In **Burkina Faso**, in May, UNHAS operated 59 flights transporting 154 passengers, serving 15 users and reaching 10 localities
- The eligibility criteria to register to UNHAS Burkina Faso was amended on 24 May: development and peace actors can now also use its services, in addition to humanitarian partners.
- In **Mali**, In May 2021, UNHAS services were used by 88 organizations with 914 passengers and 2,740 kgs of freight transported to six destinations (Bamako, Gao, Ménaka, Tombouctou, Mopti, Kayes) within the country.
- In **Niger**, the technical evaluation of the construction of new warehouses in Diffa and Maradi and with 1,000 mt capacity has been finalized. In Tahoua, two new warehouses have already been finalized and the 3rd one is in progress.
- In May 2021, UNHAS transported 1,073 passengers and 4.3 mt of cargo and performed one casualty evacuation of a staff member who passed away in Chad.

WFP Funding Partners in 2021

Burkina Faso

Austria, Burkina Faso (via the World Bank), Canada, the European Commission, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Japan, Monaco, Private Donors, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom (UK), UN CERF and the United States of America (USA).

Mali

Canada, Denmark, the European Commission, Germany, Italy, Mali (via the World Bank), Monaco, Private Donors, Switzerland, the UK, and the USA.

Niger

Australia, Canada, Denmark, the European Commission, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, Luxembourg, Monaco, New Zealand, Norway, Private Donors, Republic of Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, UN Other Funds and Agencies, the UK, and the USA. Additional support has been provided by UN CERF and UNICEF/Education Cannot Wait.