

Beat: News

Escalating needs, rising hunger: Refugees caught in the eye of the perfect storm

WFP Press Release

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ROME – Further food ration cuts are imminent for refugees as humanitarian needs multiply around the world while funding struggles to keep pace, warns the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) on World Refugee Day. The somber warning comes as WFP has already been forced to significantly reduce rations to refugees across its operations.

Ration cuts of up to 50 percent are affecting three-quarters of all refugees supported by WFP in Eastern Africa. Refugees living in Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan and Uganda are the most affected.

Severe funding constraints in West Africa, where hunger has reached a record high in a decade, have forced WFP to significantly reduce rations for refugees living in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger. WFP assists on average 500,000 refugees in Southern Africa annually. Despite generous support from donors, resourcing remains insufficient to meet the very basic needs of refugee households and imminent disruptions are expected in Angola, Malawi, Mozambique, Republic of Congo, Tanzania and Zimbabwe.

“As global hunger soars way beyond the resources available to feed all the families who desperately need WFP’s help, we are being forced to make the heart breaking decision to cut food rations for refugees who rely on us for their survival,” said WFP Executive Director David Beasley. “Without urgent new funds to support refugees - one of the world’s most vulnerable and forgotten groups of people – many facing starvation will be forced to pay with their lives.”

Hamstrung by funding constraints, WFP is having to prioritize assistance to ensure that vital food reaches the most vulnerable families first. These painful decisions very often leave refugees without support at a time where food assistance is the difference between life and death.

As WFP is forced to institute ration reductions in order to stretch limited resources, this year saw an additional 6 million refugee movements from Ukraine. Responding to the crisis, WFP in Moldova has delivered nearly 475,000 hot meals to families affected by the conflict in across 31 different localities.

According to the latest figures released by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), 67 percent of refugees and asylum seekers originated from countries with food crises in 2021. This, coupled with devastating conflict and climate extremes, is hitting refugees the hardest.

While the immediate needs of refugees remain WFP’s top concern, now, more than ever, there is also a need for sustained investments in programmes that foster the self-reliance of refugee populations. WFP, together with partners and governments is working towards building and supporting livelihood and resilience programmes for refugees.

In 2021, WFP assisted nearly 10 million refugees globally.

Source: ARAC International global media partner ReliefWeb via UN World Food Programme (WFP)

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