

PRESS RELEASE

With 35,000 Refugees in Malawi Facing Ration Cuts, UN agencies seek Urgent Funding

Lilongwe, 9 November 2018 - The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) today warned of an imminent disruption of food assistance for 35,000 refugees and asylum seekers in Malawi, urging the international community to commit the US\$4.2 million needed to support them in 2019.

The displaced, who have fled political instability and social unrest in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa regions over two decades, and are mainly from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), include more than 3,000 new arrivals since January this year.

Without additional funding, food rations will be suspended from next January, the peak of the lean season between harvests. That would risk reversing gains made to date in tackling malnutrition.

"Refugees are very often exceptionally resilient, but life for thousands of refugee and asylum seeker families will be dire without food. This will have a devastating impact on the health and nutrition of thousands of families unless more support is immediately made available," said UNHCR Malawi Representative, Monique Ekoko.

While UNHCR and WFP are working with the Government of Malawi to find lasting solutions to the plight of the refugees and asylum seekers, mainly through the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), and profiling vulnerabilities to determine appropriate support, food assistance is urgently required.

Due to limited access to arable land and other means of making a living, the displaced are largely dependent on outside help.

"WFP assistance makes up over 90 percent of the food consumed by refugees living in Malawi", said WFP Malawi Representative, Benoit Thiry. "We are grateful to our partners who have been generous in supporting our operation, and appeal for continued support so that no refugee is left behind."

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The United Nations World Food Programme - saving lives in emergencies and changing lives for millions through sustainable development. WFP works in more than 80 countries around the world, feeding people caught in conflict and disasters, and laying the foundations for a better future. Follow us on Twitter @wfp_media and @wfp_Africa.

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is dedicated to saving lives, protecting rights and building a better future for refugees, forcibly displaced communities and stateless people. In Malawi, UNHCR works with the Government to ensure that over 36,288 refugees and asylum seekers are protected and provide life-saving assistance for refugees in need. Follow us on Twitter @Refugees and @UNHCRROSA

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