

WORLD FOOD PROGRAM APPEAL FOR IVORY COAST

[World Food Program](#) (Rome) PRESS RELEASE

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Dakar The United Nations World Food Programme today launched an appeal to provide emergency relief food to victims of the civil unrest in Côte d'Ivoire, where the fast unfolding events have displaced tens of thousands of people and could result in the massive influx of civilians into neighboring countries. To respond to emergency needs of about one hundred thousand people affected by fighting between pro and anti-government forces, WFP in coordination with OCHA, the United Nations office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, is asking for US\$3 million for an initial period of three months. This regional operation will cover Côte d'Ivoire and neighboring countries, especially the ones prone to be most affected by the crisis, such as Burkina Faso, Ghana and Mali. "Despite the fragile truce between pro and anti-government forces, the security situation in Côte d'Ivoire remains highly volatile. All the ingredients are present for a large-scale humanitarian crisis, which could result in massive displacement of people in the country and possible outflow of migrant workers into neighboring countries," said Manuel Aranda da Silva, WFP's regional Director for West Africa. Fearing insecurity in key cocoa growing regions of western Côte d'Ivoire, several thousands migrant workers have escaped their cocoa fields. Most of the foreigners living in the country -some four million in all - are economic migrants and governments and aid agencies in the region have already begun contingency planning in case the fighting resumes and people escape to their countries of origin. About 10,000 vulnerable and displaced people are currently receiving emergency rations in Bouaké, the country's second largest city, and in surrounding villages. Provision of food supplies to another 5,000 migrant workers in the Man region, are also being carried out, in collaboration with humanitarian partners. But, the humanitarian situation, specially in areas held by insurgents is worsening on a daily basis and plans to complete distribution of emergency rations to other regions in the center and north of the country are pending clarification of security issues. "Safe access for relief workers to assist people in areas affected by the fighting remains a critical concern of WFP and all the humanitarian agencies," Mr Aranda da Silva said. The UN system has also expressed its concern for the protection of displaced people who left their villages and towns to avoid armed combat, those still trapped in cities controlled by insurgents as well as for the large number of West African immigrants still working in the country. The West African region is already swirling with hundreds of thousands of refugees from earlier wars in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, where some 850,000 people depend on WFP food rations for their survival.