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Security report

Introduction

1. In 2025, WFP's security came under severe and increasing pressure. Security risk management, particularly in the field, was met with a "perfect storm" of budget and staffing reductions, increased targeting of humanitarian workers, and disrespect for international humanitarian law and humanitarian principles. This not only contributed to heightened insecurity but also reduced the humanitarian space.

2. The severity of security incidents recorded in 2025 was the worst on record, while the number of incidents was the second-highest ever, representing a slight decline from 2024. The incidents that occurred in 2025 have had serious and uneven consequences and have increased WFP's exposure to risk.

3. The reduction in security and operational support capacity across the humanitarian system contributed substantially to these developments, and neither revised inter-agency arrangements nor WFP's own capacity were able to fully offset the reduced presence of the United Nations Department of Safety and Security in the field. Internal security budget and capacity constraints also reduced flexibility as well as buffer and surge capacity in several areas, requiring sharper prioritization and phased implementation of security risk management measures.

4. The review of the United Nations Security Management System commenced in April 2025 and resulted in a set of recommendations that were presented to the High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM) at its fiftieth session, held on 30 September and 1 October 2025.[1] In subsequent HLCM discussions, the Department of Safety and Security was requested to pursue several key aspects of the review, including the development of a service-level agreement for the Inter-Agency Security Management Network (IASMN). In parallel,

[1] Further details are provided in the Report of the High-level Committee on Management at its fiftieth session (CEB/2025/5).

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significant budget cuts in 2025 led to a reduction in Department of Safety and Security posts at headquarters and in the field, prompting IASMN consultations on resource pooling.

5. Security risks increasingly arose in densely populated areas, and the use of relatively new means of attack, particularly drones, increased. The use of drones also made it more difficult to distinguish between incidental and intentional harm to WFP.

6. Pressure on WFP's security is unevenly distributed across the delivery chain. While the number of security incidents affecting WFP personnel declined slightly in 2025, contractors and cooperating partners continued to face high exposure. In a pilot project, WFP developed tailored security training to support partner organizations.

7. The detention of WFP personnel in northern Yemen reflects a deterioration in the risk environment and the growing politicization of humanitarian actors and activities, whereby humanitarian personnel are treated as instruments of leverage, with implications for access, duty of care and operational continuity.

A shrinking security workforce

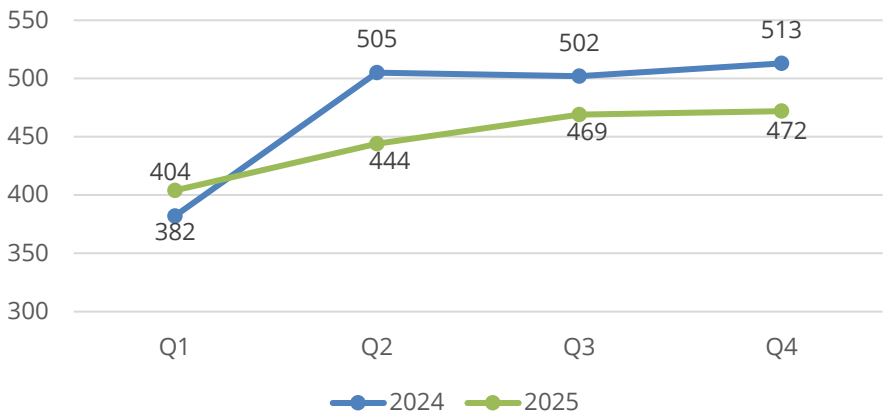
8. In 2025, the WFP security workforce averaged 509 employees globally, a decrease of 5.6 percent compared with 2024 and a continuation of an established downward trend. The reduction was driven primarily by funding constraints and was implemented despite increasing operational and security needs in the field.

9. Of the security workforce, 69.4 percent were nationally recruited in 2025, consistent with 2024 levels. This underlines WFP's continued reliance on national capacity to sustain security operations across diverse and often challenging settings. Some 61.1 percent of WFP's security personnel operated in countries classified as "non-family" duty stations,[2] indicating that a significant proportion of the workforce continued to operate in high-risk hardship environments throughout the year, even as overall staffing levels declined.

Incident trends

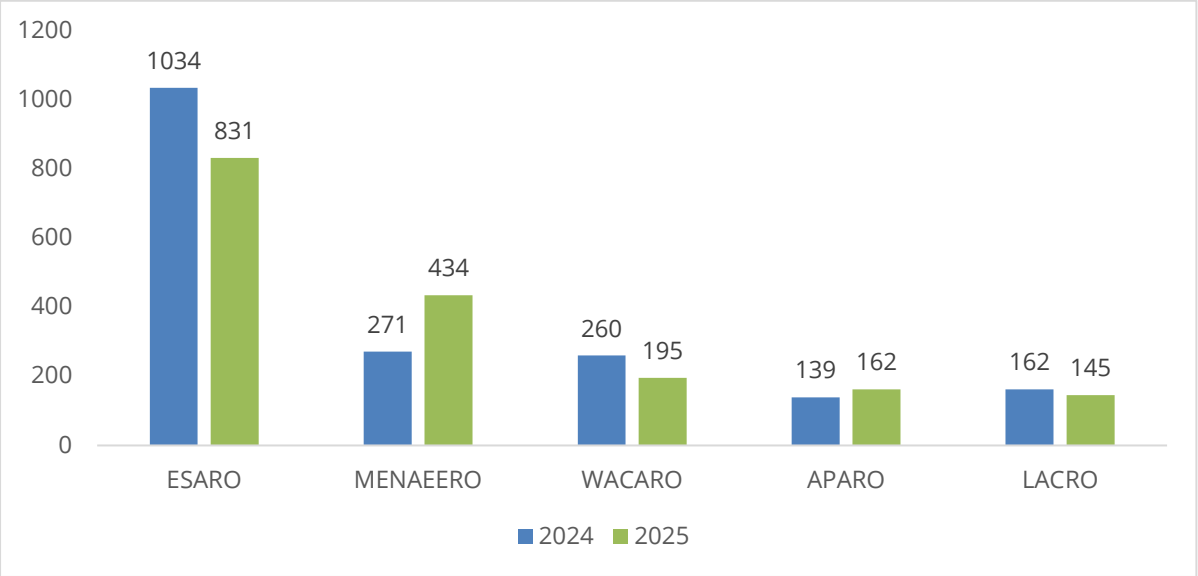
10. Following two consecutive years of increases, the total number of safety and security incidents affecting WFP, cooperating partners or contractors operating on behalf of WFP declined by 6 percent, from 1,902 incidents in 2024 to 1,789 in 2025. Except for January, each month in 2025 recorded fewer incidents than the corresponding month in 2024.

Figure 1: Quarterly number of safety and security incidents affecting WFP global operations, 2024 and 2025



[2] Duty stations classified at the "D" or "E" hardship level by the International Civil Service Commission.

Figure 2: Regional comparison of safety and security incidents affecting WFP global operations, 2024 and 2025



Abbreviations: APARO = Asia and the Pacific Regional Office; ESARO = Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office; LACRO = Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office; MENAEERO = Middle East, Northern Africa, and Eastern Europe Regional Office; WACARO = Western and Central Africa Regional Office.

11. In the countries covered by the Middle East, Northern Africa, and Eastern Europe Regional Office, the number of incidents increased by 60 percent compared with 2024. Unlike in other global regions, the incidents included numerous acts of violence resulting in major injuries. The increase was driven primarily by events in the State of Palestine and the Syrian Arab Republic. In the Syrian Arab Republic, there was a significant increase in reported incidents, many of which involved harassment, intimidation and threats of violence, with the number increasing from 45 in 2024 to 58 in 2025.

12. The countries covered by the Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office continued to account for the largest proportion (45 percent) of all reported security incidents), consistent with the size of WFP's operational footprint in that region. However, the total number of incidents recorded in the region in 2025 fell by almost 20 percent compared with 2024. Incidents in countries covered by the Western and Central Africa Regional Office declined by almost one third, while those in countries covered by the Asia and the Pacific Regional Office and the Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office remained at levels similar to those recorded in 2024.

13. WFP's operation in the State of Palestine recorded the highest number of reported incidents, with an increase of 205 percent (from 86 in 2024 to 263 in 2025), surpassing operations in Ethiopia (second, with 221 incidents) and South Sudan (179). The Democratic Republic of the Congo recorded an increase of 81 percent in reported incidents, which rose from 53 in 2024 to 96 in 2025, reflecting insecurity in the eastern part of the country. Afghanistan also recorded a 25 percent increase in reported safety and security incidents.

Figure 3: Countries experiencing the highest number of security incidents, 2024 and 2025

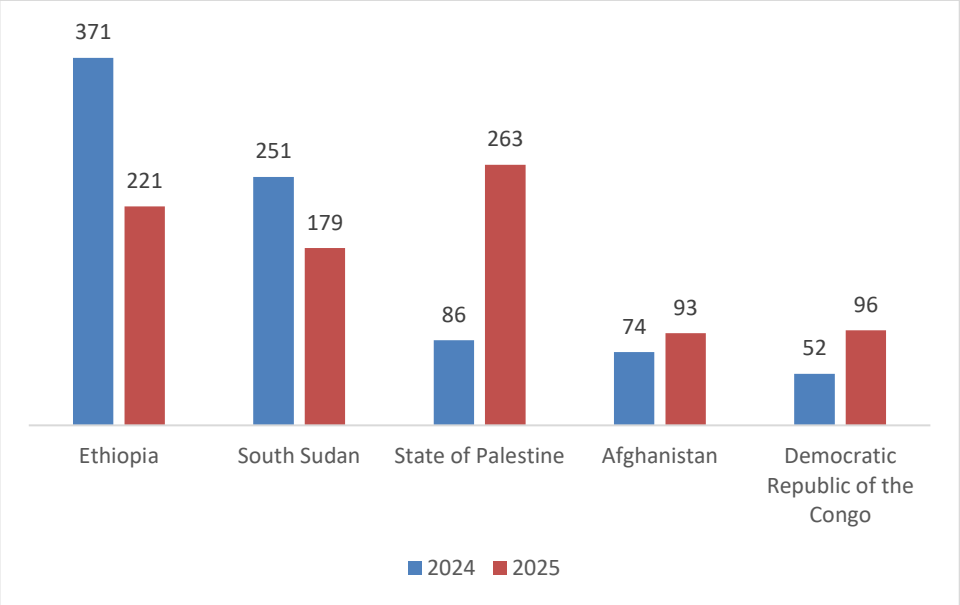
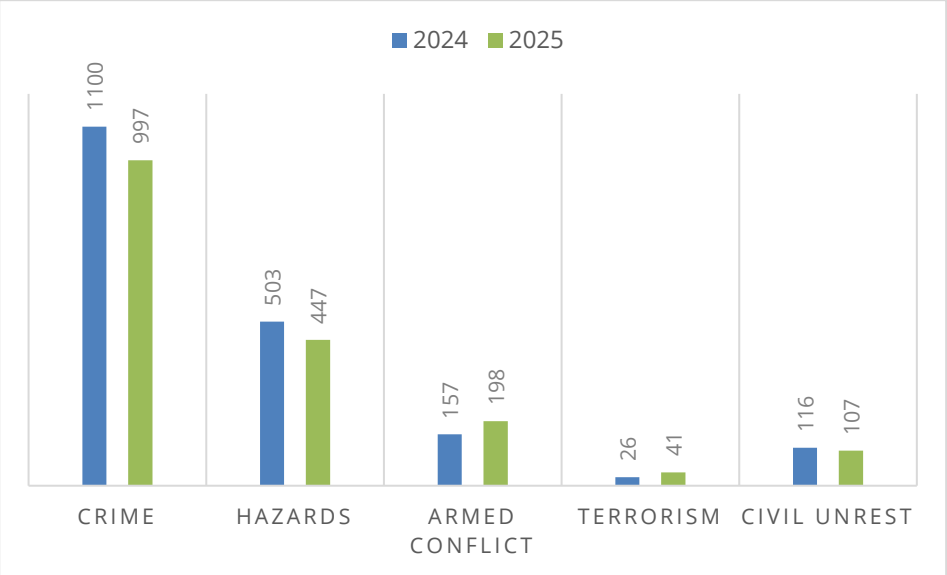


Figure 4: Number of incidents by threat type, 2024 and 2025



14. Compared with 2024, the number of major incidents – that is, those resulting in death, major injury or abduction – declined marginally by 2 percent, with 53 incidents recorded in 2025, 66 percent of which involved violence. Major incidents affected 80 individuals, including 16 WFP personnel, 5 dependants, 9 cooperating partner employees and 50 contractors.

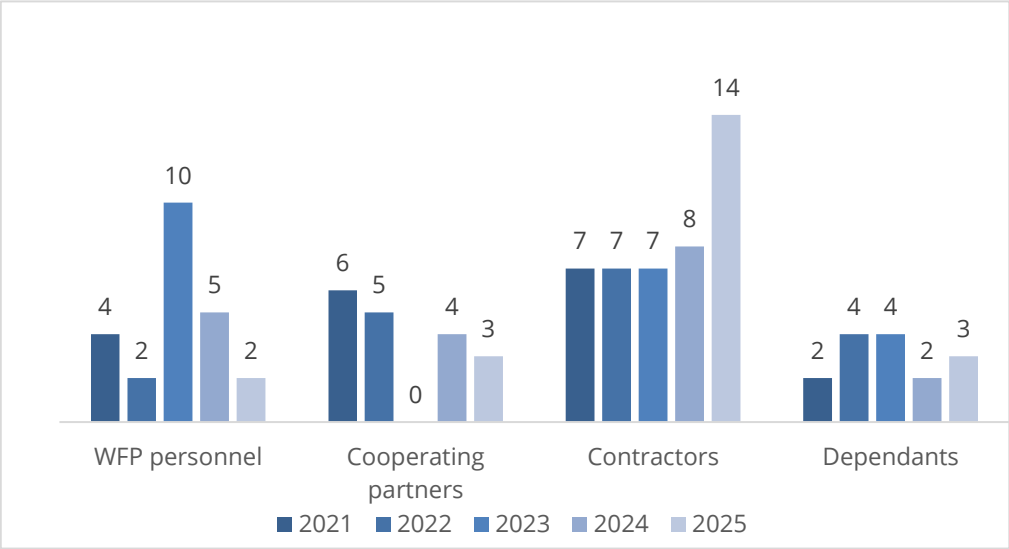
15. Among WFP personnel, the number of incidents declined overall in 2025. Compared with 2024, fatalities decreased from 5 to 2, major injuries from 13 to 11, and staff abductions from 7 to 3. These trends may reflect enhanced risk mitigation measures.

16. Among cooperating partners, the number of incidents declined overall, with incidents resulting in major injuries decreasing from two in 2024 to one in 2025, and abductions declining from ten to five. Among dependants of WFP staff, no major injuries were recorded in 2025. There was also a decrease in the number of dependant abductions, from three in 2024 to two in 2025. However, fatalities among dependants increased from two to three.

17. By contrast, contractors experienced a marked deterioration in their risk exposure. Fatalities more than doubled, from 6 to 14, major injuries increased from 18 to 22, and abductions rose from 10 to 14. This may reflect a shift in risk exposure from WFP personnel to contractors, who were the most affected group in 2025.

18. Of the 53 major incidents recorded in 2025, 15 resulted in fatalities, with a total of 22 people losing their lives: 14 contractors, 3 cooperating partner employees, 3 dependants of WFP staff and 2 WFP personnel. This was a 38 percent increase from the 16 deaths recorded in 2024, suggesting that, while the overall number of incidents remained relatively stable, those that occurred tended to result in more severe outcomes.

Figure 5: Five-year trend in fatalities among WFP personnel, cooperating partners, contractors and dependants



19. Armed attacks were the leading cause of fatalities in 2025, accounting for 11 of the 22 recorded deaths. Nine of these fatalities were of contractors, while two cooperating partner personnel also lost their lives.

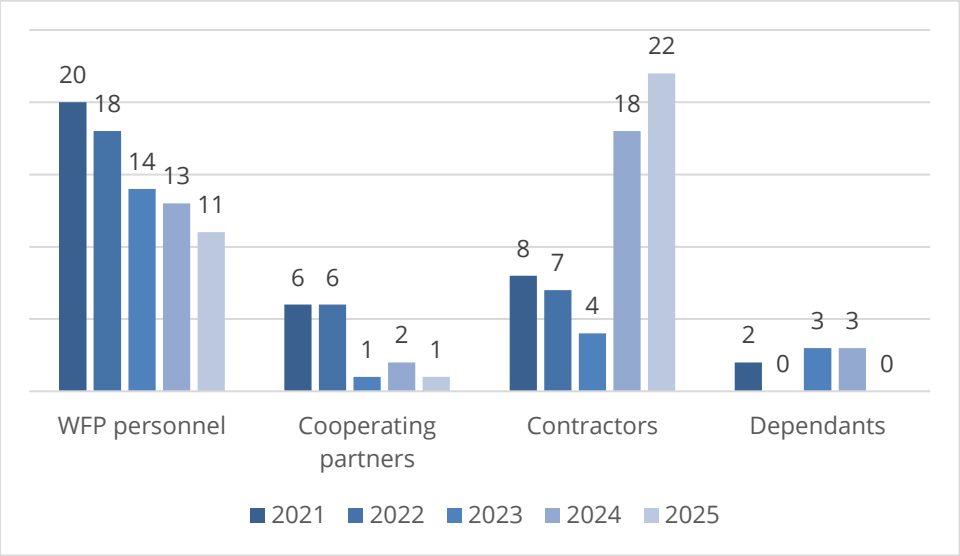
20. The death of a WFP staff member in detention in Yemen reflects an emerging and serious risk. The staff member died due to severe conditions while in custody, highlighting the risks associated with harsh detention measures in politically sensitive environments.

21. Over the five years from 2021 to 2025, the most significant trend is the clear and sustained rise in contractor fatalities, which remained consistently high over the period and surged sharply in the final year. In contrast, fatalities among WFP personnel, cooperating partner personnel and dependants fluctuated without a sustained upward trend. Contractors were the group most at risk of fatal incidents during that five-year period.

22. There were 34 major injuries in 2025, equivalent to a decrease of 6 percent from the 36 recorded in 2024. Contractors were once again the most affected group (65 percent), followed by WFP personnel (32 percent) and cooperating partner personnel (3 percent). No major injuries were reported among dependants.

23. Over the five-year period from 2021 to 2025, the number of major injuries among contractors increased overall, with a sharp increase in the final two years, following the trend seen in contractor fatalities. In contrast, major injuries among WFP personnel declined steadily over the period in question, while those among cooperating partner personnel decreased to very low levels after 2022 and those among dependants occurred sporadically.

Figure 6: Five-year trend in major injuries among WFP personnel, cooperating partner personnel, contractors and dependants



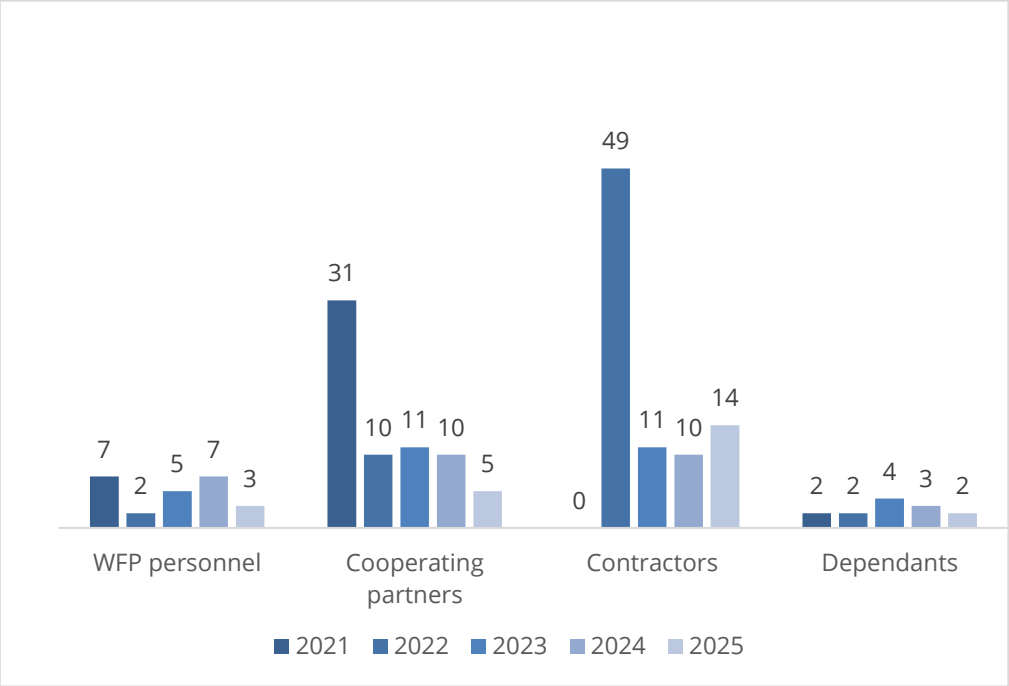
24. Violence was a significant driver of major injuries in 2025, with 54 percent of such injuries resulting from armed attacks, robbery or assault in Chad, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, the State of Palestine, Uganda and Ukraine.

25. The number of incidents involving abductions increased slightly (from 14 to 15), while the number of individuals abducted decreased (from 30 to 24).

26. The duration of abductions ranged from a few hours to 18 days, with most incidents resolved within the same day. Ethiopia recorded the highest number of abducted persons (six contractors across two incidents), followed by the State of Palestine (four contractors across four incidents). Countries covered by the Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office were the most affected, followed by those covered by the Western and Central Africa Regional Office and the Middle East, Northern Africa, and Eastern Europe Regional Office. No abduction incidents were reported in the other two global regions.

27. The total number of incidents resulting in abductions fluctuated over the five-year period from 2021 to 2025, with no consistent upward or downward trend. Incidents affecting WFP personnel remained relatively few in number but varied over time, suggesting exposure to sporadic spikes in insecurity. The number of abductions affecting cooperating partner personnel decreased sharply after 2021 and then remained relatively stable until 2025, when it declined further, possibly as a result of strengthened mitigation measures or reduced exposure in the field.

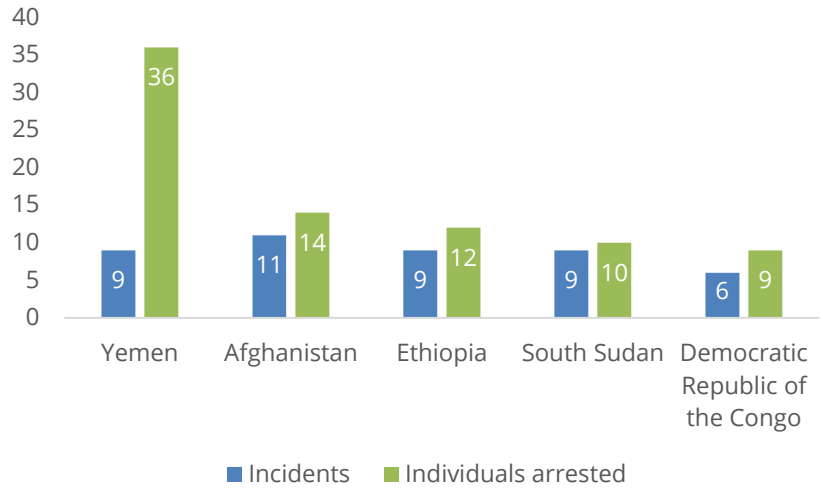
Figure 7: Five-year trend in abductions among WFP personnel, cooperating partners, contractors and dependants



28. In 59 percent of all security incidents, the individuals affected were physically unharmed. While WFP operations can expose staff, cooperating partners and contractors to security risks, most incidents in 2025 did not result in physical harm. Most incidents affecting WFP personnel involved robbery or theft and caused no injuries.

29. Arrests accounted for 12 percent of security incidents, with 62 incidents. Overall, 107 individuals were arrested: 65 WFP personnel, 28 contractors, 10 cooperating partner personnel and 4 dependants. In most cases, those arrested were released on the same day. Almost half of the arrests (36 individuals) occurred in Yemen, a country in which there have been numerous arrests of humanitarian workers.

Figure 8: Incidents resulting in arrest and individuals affected, 2025

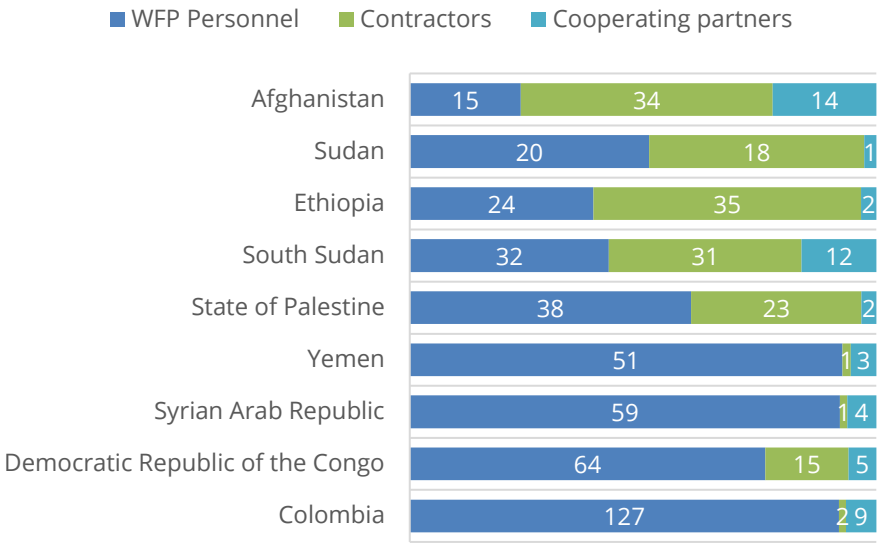


30. Among cooperating partners, most incidents affecting individuals involved harassment, with assault the second most common incident type. By contrast, contractors were most affected by robberies, targeted armed attacks, road traffic crashes and collateral exposure to armed conflict, which accounted for 10 percent of incidents. These patterns are consistent with the roles of contractors and cooperating partner personnel as "last-mile" deliverers in many humanitarian operations.

31. The countries that recorded the highest number of incidents affecting WFP personnel differ from those that recorded the highest number of incidents affecting cooperating partner personnel and contractors. A comparison of countries with the highest number of incidents shows that the distribution of affected groups varies across countries.

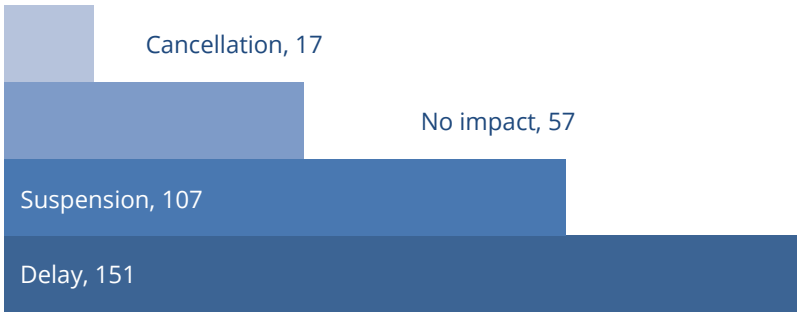
32. While some operating environments present consistent risks for all groups (Afghanistan, Colombia, South Sudan, the State of Palestine), differences in incident exposure may reflect variations in operational modalities. In Colombia, for example, WFP personnel are more frequently involved in last-mile deliveries, while in Ethiopia and South Sudan there is greater reliance on contractors for last-mile delivery. The high number of incidents involving WFP personnel in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Syrian Arab Republic is consistent with the evolving risk profiles of those countries. Risk increased in the former as a result of the March 23 Movement (M23) attack on Goma in January 2025 and, in the latter, as a result of armed clashes following the collapse of the Government of Bashar al-Assad in December 2024.

Figure 9: Distribution of incidents among WFP personnel, contractors and cooperating partner personnel, selected countries, 2025



33. In 2025, 338 incidents resulted in disruptions to programme delivery. Forty-five percent of incidents resulted in delays in operations, while 32 percent resulted in the temporary suspension of operations. Seventeen percent of incidents had no impact on operations. In nearly 94 percent of incidents, WFP was able to resume operations and deliver assistance despite the disruption caused. In around 5 percent of incidents, however, WFP was forced to cancel activities entirely.

Figure 10: Impact of security incidents on operational continuity, 2025



34. Programme cancellations resulted primarily from situations of armed conflict that made continuity of operations impossible. Ukraine recorded the highest number of such cancellations. In the Syrian Arab Republic, attacks by government-affiliated forces against religious minorities in As-Sweida Governorate in late April also resulted in the cancellation of activities.

35. Overall, incidents affecting WFP operations were primarily related to harassment or intimidation (12 percent), movement restrictions (12 percent), robberies (10 percent) and the collateral impact of armed violence (9 percent). Disruptions to programme delivery were largely associated with miscommunication with, or restrictions imposed by, local or de facto authorities. Where disruptions resulted from incidents involving violence, that violence tended to be linked to the broader security context, rather than stemming from any hostility directed towards WFP operations. Issues related to the acceptance of WFP operations were primarily administrative in nature.

36. In 2025, an estimated total of 67,409 mt of food was lost as a result of security incidents. This is the first report to include quantitative data on food losses due to security incidents, following the introduction of a new reporting mechanism on food losses within the security reporting system. As such, no comparative data for previous years are available.

37. In 2025, 1,502 beneficiaries were affected by security incidents, as reported to WFP. It is likely that the number of affected beneficiaries is much higher, due to underreporting. Of these incidents, 91 percent (1,372) were cases of looting in the State of Palestine, many of which resulted in serious injuries among civilians. Those incidents occurred in the context of a highly volatile armed conflict environment in Gaza, where civilians face significant risks when attempting to obtain food. Of the 1,129 incidents in which beneficiaries were injured, 1,121 occurred in the State of Palestine. In almost all cases, injuries resulted from gunfire directed at crowds. Of the 253 beneficiary deaths recorded in 2025, 251 occurred in the State of Palestine.

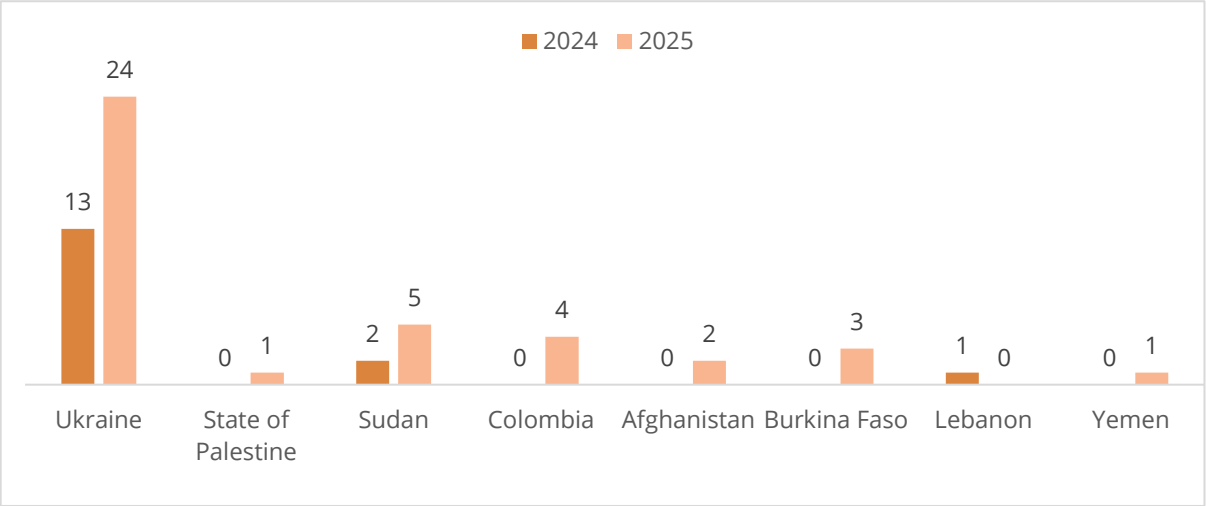
38. The number of countries with WFP operations that were affected by drone-related risks increased from three in 2024 to seven in 2025. Most incidents followed previously observed patterns, with collateral damage affecting WFP facilities, personnel or distribution points; however, the scale and operational impact of drone-related incidents increased sharply, particularly in Burkina Faso, the Sudan and Ukraine. The distribution of incidents across different operations points to a normalization of the use of armed drones in humanitarian settings.

39. The Sudan witnessed the most significant deterioration in the security landscape compared to 2024. Critical supply routes were repeatedly affected by attacks occurring near active front lines and along humanitarian corridors. Attacks outside areas of active hostilities increasingly undermined humanitarian logistics. Drone strikes affected WFP-contracted trucks both in transit and while stationary, resulting in the destruction of assets, including food commodities, and serious injuries to contractors.

40. Drone attacks in Ukraine resulted in the highest levels of direct damage to WFP assets. Drone-related incidents included the destruction of a WFP warehouse, repeated strikes by small, remotely operated drones on cooperating partner vehicles, injuries to volunteer humanitarian workers, and damage to trucks transporting WFP food kits. In Burkina Faso, a United Nations Humanitarian Air Service helicopter carrying WFP food supplies came under drone attack during an airlift operation.

41. In Afghanistan, Colombia, the State of Palestine and Yemen, reported drone activity near WFP locations resulted in minor damage, movement restrictions and operational delays. While WFP may not have been the intended target in these countries, such activity consistently created unsafe operating environments and disrupted programme delivery.

Figure 11: Drone-related incidents, 2024 and 2025



42. Drone-related security threats are expected to increase further, driven by the technology's low cost, ease of acquisition and high tactical value for both State and non-State actors. The use of weaponized drones in densely populated urban areas, including in counter-gang operations (e.g. Haiti), is likely to reduce predictability and early warning capacity in environments already marked by acute volatility.

43. The Security Division developed new guidance for field operations to address drone-related risks and enhanced its partnership efforts with bilateral actors other humanitarian organizations, and security coordination mechanisms.

Security operations support – prioritization under pressure

44. Budgetary constraints affected not only WFP but also the wider United Nations system and other humanitarian actors; as a result, WFP operations were increasingly constrained by reduced external support and limited assets essential to programme delivery. At the same time, WFP's operational surge capacity was rendered more cumbersome.

45. A key consequence of the reduction in budgetary resources was that security considerations no longer simply shaped how operations were delivered but increasingly determined whether operations could be delivered at all. Evacuations, relocations, mission suspensions and tighter restrictions on movement reduced WFP's footprint in several critical locations.

46. Security constraints also adversely affected staff well-being and resilience. Prolonged deployment in high-risk and volatile operating environments and increased workloads placed significant pressure on personnel. Security personnel were required to manage continuous high-intensity operations, often with limited rotation, surge support or recovery time, thereby increasing the risk of fatigue, burnout and reduced performance at critical moments.

47. Overall, 2025 marked a fundamental shift, requiring the WFP Security Division not only to prioritize risk management decisions but also to redefine how risk is accepted, mitigated and communicated across the organization.

48. In the light of commitments made to the Executive Board in 2025, the security strengthening programme transitioned from design to operational delivery as a time-bound response to sustained pressure on WFP's security capacity. In 2025, a formal governance and performance-tracking framework was established under the programme at global headquarters to prioritize, coordinate and document implementation across country offices. The programme is focused on a narrow set of practical outputs: standardizing security risk analysis and reinforcing process discipline in line with audit requirements; supporting security budget-related inputs for country strategic plans and the rollout of a standardized security budgeting tool to be piloted in 2026; and deploying time-bound technical capacity, using internal resources and without additional cost to the organization, to support audit closure and the implementation of the security strengthening programme. In parallel, the programme supported the adoption of digital and analytical tools to improve the availability and reliability of data on personnel and security incidents and to enable the systematic tracking of actions taken in response to critical security incidents, thereby contributing to corporate learning and accountability.

Budgetary constraints leading to increased risk

In the Sudan, severe financial constraints resulted in a hyper-prioritization of assistance. Convoys were required to pass through or bypass certain areas without stopping, including communities facing crisis levels of food insecurity (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification phase 3). This generated visible frustration among affected populations and raised conflict-sensitivity concerns, increasing tensions along convoy routes and heightening the risk of interference in, and hostility towards, humanitarian operations.

Across the Sahelian countries, including Burkina Faso and the Niger, financial constraints resulted in a reduced field presence. Limited security capacity increased exposure to opportunistic attacks, while restricted access to remote areas further constrained WFP's ability to maintain a consistent presence in the field.

In Kenya, the operational impact of financial constraints was particularly evident. In Kakuma and Kalobeyei, funding shortfalls in mid-2025 triggered refugee demonstrations during WFP activities, which escalated into violence. Personnel from WFP, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and cooperating partners were attacked, prompting police intervention. Facilities were damaged, individuals were injured, and operations were suspended for more than two months.

Across multiple operations, reduced investment in enabling services, such as communications and aviation, together with the withdrawal or reduced footprint of United Nations missions, including in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan, affected the overall security environment. This reduced the availability of security and operational support services, particularly in relation to route clearance, airfield operations, aviation support and medical evacuation (MEDEVAC/CASEVAC) capacity.

Security Division activities in the context of the duty of care framework[3]

49. In 2025, centrally coordinated security training to support high-risk operations and surge deployments was delivered on a prioritized basis, as demand continued to exceed available capacity. Delivery relied to a significant extent on the support provided by partners, including the Asian Development Bank, the World Health Organization and the Department of Safety and Security, as well as on the availability of trainers, necessitating increased use of regional and decentralized delivery modalities.

50. Complementary security awareness initiatives included training for female WFP and United Nations personnel, promoting inclusive security risk management, and strengthening individual preparedness in a range of operating environments. In parallel, first-responder capacity-building activities continued across operations, enhancing emergency and mass-casualty response capabilities. In 2025, a total of 3,171 personnel from WFP, the United Nations and cooperating partners participated in in-person training delivered by the Security Division; of these, 585 participated in the women's security awareness training course.

51. At the same time, broader system-level developments, including the ongoing independent review of the United Nations Security Management System and the sustained financial and human resource constraints affecting the Department of Safety and Security, reduced the provision of core training for security personnel. In response, the Security Division continued to adjust its approach by prioritizing critical competencies, strengthening internal training capacity and expanding decentralized training delivery in order to maintain operational readiness in the field and enable safer operations for WFP personnel and cooperating partners.

52. In cooperation with non-governmental organizations and United Nations partners, and as part of the "Not a Target" campaign, the WFP Security Division spearheaded a number of initiatives to enhance the security of humanitarian personnel. Options for resource pooling in the areas of fire safety, air travel safety and road safety were also explored, both with United Nations partners and within the context of the Rome-based agency cooperation framework.

[3] The duty of care accountability and governance framework, introduced in November 2024, outlines WFP's commitment to ensuring a healthy, safe, respectful and inclusive workplace. The framework sets out core principles, definitions, accountabilities and governance structure.

Security training for individuals working on behalf of WFP

To promote the localization, the WFP Security Division mobilized core resources to scale up the security risk management capacity of cooperating partners in Kenya. Training was delivered to 26 local and national organizations operating in high-risk environments in Dadaab, Garissa, Kakuma, Marsabit, Samburu and Wajir. Those locations were prioritized owing to the significant impact of the 2025 funding crisis on refugee support and the deteriorating security environment faced by partners responsible for delivering assistance there.

The initiative, implemented jointly with other United Nations actors and a commercial provider, reached 588 trainees, including cooperating partner programme managers, security focal points, enumerators, warehouse staff and security guards. Eighty percent of participants were national personnel. Training sessions covered incident management and reporting; appropriate responses to ambushes, bomb attacks, kidnapping, active shooter situations and civil unrest; fire safety; women-specific security awareness; and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse.

Similar training was delivered in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Syrian Arab Republic and Ukraine.

Digital transformation in support of increased efficiency

53. In 2025, the Security Division continued to consolidate its digital transformation by embedding compliance and assurance functions within a coherent corporate framework. Progress on a comprehensive review of the compliance platform strengthened the division's ability to monitor adherence to security policies and standards in a structured, auditable and scalable manner, while reducing reliance on fragmented legacy systems. In parallel, continued investment in data governance and analytics improved the quality, consistency and usability of core security data, reinforcing evidence-based decision making and accountability in support of duty of care obligations.

54. A central focus in 2025 was the delivery of practical, field-oriented digital capabilities to support security officers operating in complex and high-risk environments. The pilot roll out of a security management console within corporate human resources systems significantly enhanced the management of data on personnel and dependants, providing a more reliable and authoritative view of staff deployment and responsibilities. At the same time, the consolidation and enhancement of communication channels enabled security officers to contact WFP personnel and their dependants more rapidly, particularly in emergency situations.

55. To ensure sustainability and maximize impact, the Security Division complemented the rollout of digital tools with a strong emphasis on knowledge management, user adoption and change management. Security policies, guidance and best practices were consolidated into accessible and quality-assured digital platforms and tools, supporting their consistent application across operations. Greater attention to change management and the uptake of new tools helped to embed more integrated ways of working, with access to information structured according to users' roles and responsibilities. Together, these efforts position digital transformation as a core enabler of more coherent, responsive and accountable security services across WFP.

Resource optimization and budgetary highlights

56. The WFP Security Division plays a central role in enabling WFP to deliver life-saving assistance in some of the world's most volatile and high-risk environments. Services ranging from risk assessments and security advisories to emergency coordination, field support and duty of care are essential to programme implementation and to the safety and security of personnel.

57. Persistent budgetary constraints continue to place significant pressure on the operational capacity of the Security Division. Constrained programme support and administrative resources reduce the division's capacity to strengthen its field presence, invest in essential security infrastructure and scale up preparedness efforts in response to emerging threats. These resource and capacity constraints not only slow the advancement of critical security initiatives but may also constrain WFP's ability to prevent and mitigate risks affecting programme continuity and the safety of personnel and affected populations. Ensuring predictable and adequate funding remains essential to safeguarding WFP operations and upholding the organization's mandate to reach people in need wherever they are.