



United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS)

Annual Review 2021

May 2022

A LIFELINE IN THE SKY



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FOREWORD

As we look back on the past year, the impacts of natural hazards, escalating conflicts and worsening economic conditions, along with the continued effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, have led to increased vulnerabilities and humanitarian needs. Air transport remains the only safe and reliable means of providing the humanitarian community with access to many locations around the world. For example, WFP launched in 2021 an additional UNHAS operation to support the Ebola outbreak response in southern Guinea and established a UNHAS airbridge following a deadly explosion in Equatorial Guinea. In August 2021, UNHAS began operating flights to the Great South of Madagascar, enabling aid workers to reach areas facing alarming levels of food insecurity. In addition, the year was marked by the unfolding of the crisis in Afghanistan, the aftermath of the earthquake in Haiti, and the intensifying crisis in northern Ethiopia.

When disasters strike, the capacity of the humanitarian community to organize an immediate and efficient response often makes the difference between life and death for thousands of people. The availability of an efficient and effective humanitarian air service goes a long way in enabling the response. UNHAS continued to deliver humanitarian and health items to 24 countries facing crisis and emergency in 2021.

I would like to thank all who contributed to ensuring that in 2021, UNHAS remained funded and capable to provide the humanitarian, health and development workers, the access they require to provide timely and life-saving assistance to the most vulnerable people and communities.



This would not have been possible without the continued engagement, efforts, work and dedication from all our Partners: the Donor community, Governments, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), Civil Aviation Authorities, Regional Civil Aviation Agencies, the International Air Transport Association (IATA), our contracted Air Carriers, our User Agencies and passengers, and, most of all, our committed and determined national and international humanitarian aviation workers.

Philippe Martou

Chief of the WFP Aviation Service

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Philippe Martou', written over a horizontal line.

UNHAS 2021 IN NUMBERS



496

destinations reached (regular + ad hoc)



46,145

flights completed



325,112

passengers transported



5,862 MT

cargo transported



75

aircraft (59 fixed-wing and 16 helicopters)



616

MEDEVACs performed (including 50 COVID-19 patients)



2,399

SECEVACs performed

OTHER AIR SERVICES OFFERED BY WFP

United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS)

Managed by WFP, UNHAS, has been providing safe, reliable and cost-effective air transport services for decades. UNHAS operates in countries where no suitable commercial aviation options are available, providing passenger flights, light cargo transport, and medical and security evacuation capacity for the wider humanitarian and development community.

WFP currently manages a total of 22 UNHAS operations covering 24 countries and serving more than 300 regular destinations via a global fleet of more than 100 aircraft, which provide humanitarians with access to some of the most remote and hard-to-reach destinations on the planet.



Airlift¹ and Airdrop² in both emergency and protracted operations ensuring uninterrupted delivery of relief supplies.

Dedicated bilateral services for passenger transport that meets other organizations' needs.

WFP-managed EU Humanitarian Aid Flight (ECHO Flight)

In February 2020, WFP signed an indirect management delegation agreement with the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) for a project entitled "Provision of Air Service in Support of DG ECHO-funded and other humanitarian aid projects in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali and Kenya", which will come up for renewal in the fourth quarter of 2022. A subsequent operational name change in accordance with ECHO's new communication and visibility strategy triggered a full rebranding, with the name "ECHO Flight" being replaced by "EU Humanitarian Aid Flight" ("vol humanitaire de l'UE").

The current fleet composition comprises three dedicated aircraft: a Cessna Caravan in Mali, and a Mi-8 and a Cessna Caravan in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In Kenya, WFP shares with ECHO Flight a DHC-8 aircraft currently contracted under long-term air charter agreements for UNHAS operations. The EU Humanitarian Aid Flight project is flexible and agile in responding to changing environments in protracted settings, and will continually make the adjustments needed for dedicated, safe and cost-effective air transport in support of European Union-funded humanitarian projects in existing or new operational settings.

Scheduled and ad hoc air transport for passenger including air transport for emergency, medical evacuations and security relocations.



¹ AIRLIFT: Transport of cargo by aircraft on a predefined route to any destination around the world. Often performed to or from an otherwise inaccessible area, such as through a strategic airlift of emergency food, supplies and/or equipment to an area devastated by political upheaval or natural disaster.

² AIRDROP: A type of airlift in which goods are dropped from the aircraft. In certain circumstances, security concerns, a lack of operational airfields, inaccessibility for other delivery modes or a combination of these factors make airdrops the best method for delivering food directly into a crisis area. Airdrop operations are predominantly for food. When the goods are delicate, large or heavy, they are dropped with parachutes to slow down the descent as much as possible. The WFP Aviation Service was the first air transport service to perform high-altitude airdrops in humanitarian settings (in Deir Ezzor in the Syrian Arab Republic in 2016).

UNHAS AS THE KEY TO ACCESS FOR GLOBAL HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

Timely and unhindered access throughout crisis-affected locations is at the heart of the humanitarian endeavour.

Ensuring access to vulnerable people who need life-saving assistance during an emergency can be challenging. Over the last year, an already complex situation as regards humanitarian access has become increasingly difficult. Even though many of the access constraints confronting humanitarian actors – such as conflict and insecurity, underfunding and poor road infrastructure – predate COVID-19 and continue to be the greatest challenges, the access challenges posed by the pandemic have had an unprecedented effect in undermining the ability to reach and assist people in need. Creating a real danger for humanitarian staff and the risk of restrictions on the distribution of aid to the millions of people who need it to survive. However, despite this context of increased humanitarian needs alongside multiplied and amplified access challenges, the humanitarian and development communities were able to continue delivering uninterrupted assistance thanks to the air transport services provided by WFP.

When safe and reliable humanitarian access and the rapid delivery of aid are required, the aviation sector is the first point of call. Aviation plays an essential role in the movement of humanitarian workers and the delivery of food, medical supplies and shelter. Air services are crucial in situations where crumbling infrastructure or active conflict cuts off access to entire regions.

UNHAS is a key component of the global humanitarian system, offering safe, reliable, cost-efficient and effective passenger and light cargo transport for all humanitarian and development entities, and often providing the only viable solution for access to areas with logistical constraints where no safe surface transport or viable commercial aviation options are available.

When did it all start?

WFP began its large-scale air operations in the 1980s transporting food and humanitarian workers to countries that included Angola, Ethiopia, Somalia and the Sudan. Air transport subsequently evolved into an integral part of WFP's logistics. Gradually, the WFP Aviation Service shifted the focus of its work from addressing an internal need for food delivery to providing a common service for the overall humanitarian community. In the early 1990s, an increase in global humanitarian crises led to an increased need for air support to enable the timely delivery of food, medicine and shelter.

Many United Nations agencies maintained their own air operations, reflecting their individual organizational needs. Following a series of serious incidents and accidents, the United Nations High-Level Committee on Management assigned WFP the mandate of leading all United Nations humanitarian air operations, which entered into effect on 1 January 2004. WFP established an independent aviation safety unit along with structure for the provision of aviation services in line with the standards of the International Civil Aviation Organization and the industry.

WFP was assigned the mandate because of its leadership in humanitarian logistics and the WFP-managed United Nations Humanitarian Air Service has become the leading provider of air transport for the humanitarian and development communities.



WFP stages largest humanitarian airdrop in history via Operation Lifeline Sudan, April 1989

UNHAS PRESENCE IN 2021



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https://www.yunbaogao.cn/report/index/report?reportId=5_31127

