

2,500 Niger children die of malnutrition in 2013: UN

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More than 2,500 children under five have died of malnutrition in Niger this year, the UN Children Fund said Wednesday.

The child mortality rate has declined over recent years but still stands at one percent and UNICEF said the impoverished west African was one of the world most aid-reliant countries.

"Without international aid in Niger, we would see [children](#) dying by their tens of thousands" each year, Guido Cornale, the UNICEF representative in Niger, told AFP by phone.

Niger, which has been hit by several famines in recent years and ranked last on the UN's Human Development Index in 2012, has received close to \$900 million since 2010 to combat [food crises](#).

"It is undeniable that the government is trying to combat [malnutrition](#)... But the level of... dependence is alarming," an expert said on condition of anonymity.

The food problem in Niger is compounded by its location between the desert and several strife-torn countries, and the world's highest fertility rate which means its population doubles every 18 years.

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