

# Morocco to pray for rain

November 23 2017, by Hamza Mekouar

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A man walks through what used to be an oasis near the southeast Moroccan town of Erfoud in the Sahara Desert

Parched Morocco which is heavily dependent on its agricultural sector is to hold prayers for rain Friday in mosques across the country under a royal decree.

"Water is becoming more and more scarce. We keep having to dig deeper to find any," said Houcine Aderdour, president of a producers' federation and an orange farmer in the Souss region of southern

Morocco.

Like its Iberian neighbours to the north, Portugal and Spain, Morocco has suffered a severe shortage of [rainfall](#) since the end of the summer.

Moroccan university studies show that temperatures have risen by up to 4 degrees Celsius since the 1960s and [annual rainfall](#) been on the decline.

The drought has hit cereal production this season and could force the country of 35 million inhabitants to resort to imports.

King Mohammed VI, in his official capacity as "commander of the faithful", has called for prayers in all Moroccan mosques "to implore the Almighty to spread his benevolent rains on the earth", the ministry of Islamic affairs said in a statement.

The weather has become a major topic of conversation across Morocco, 40 percent of whose population depend on [agriculture](#) for their livelihood and where the sector accounts for more than 15 percent of GDP.

"It's too early to speak of drought. But if there's no rainfall by mid-December, the situation will turn critical," an agriculture ministry official said, on condition of anonymity.

On top of the scarcity of rainfall, aquifers have been overexploited for agriculture.

According to local media, royal police aircraft are to inject salt crystals into the clouds to artificially induce rainfall.

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