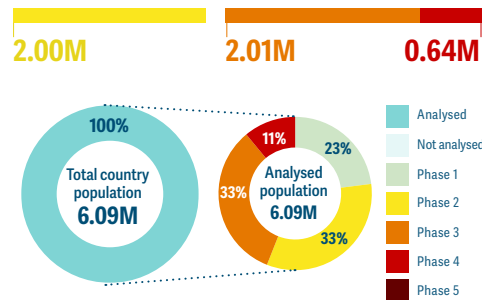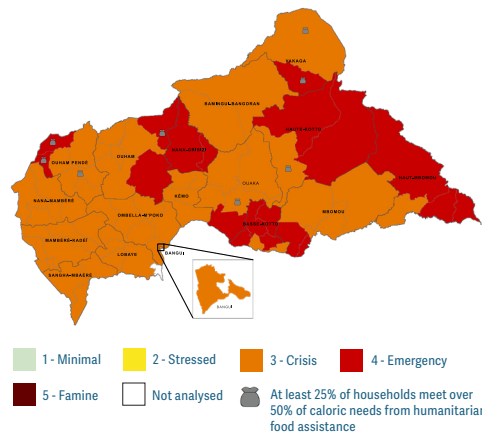# Central African Republic

ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY PEAK 2022

2.65M people or **44%** of the analysed population in IPC Phase 3 or above, September 2022–March 2023

2.00M   **2.01M**   **0.64M**

100%
Total country population
6.09M

11%
23%
33%
Analysed population
6.09M
33%

Analysed
Not analysed
Phase 1
Phase 2
Phase 3
Phase 4
Phase 5

IPC acute food insecurity situation, September 2022–March 2023

1 - Minimal
2 - Stressed
3 - Crisis
4 - Emergency
5 - Famine
Not analysed
At least 25% of households meet over 50% of caloric needs from humanitarian food assistance

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on these maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Source: Central African Republic IPC TWG, November 2022.

Food crisis overview

During September 2022–March 2023, around 44 percent of the total population of the Central African Republic was in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) – a slightly lower prevalence than that of the 2021 peak in April–August (47 percent).

The absolute number of people in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) increased by nearly 16 percent. Part of the increase was due to the change in the base population used for the analyses – from 4.9 million people for previous analyses to 6.1 million people.

As insecurity and armed violence continued to have far-reaching consequences on food availability and access, some 19 areas were classified in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) – down from 22 during the 2021 peak period – and the remaining 52 in Crisis (IPC Phase 3). The situation was worst in the Nana-Mambéré prefecture where 64 percent of the population was in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above).

A worsening outlook for 2023

In the projected period of April–August 2023, which coincides with the lean season, the situation is expected to worsen with almost 3 million people (49 percent of the population) likely to be in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above), including 807 000 in Emergency (IPC Phase 4).

In Haut-Mbomou, Mbomou, Nana-Gribizi, Nana-Mambéré and Ouham Pendé, 60–65 percent of the population will likely be in IPC Phase 3 or above. During this period, 33 sub-prefectures are likely to be in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) and 38 in Crisis (IPC Phase 3). The capital Bangui will remain in a situation of Crisis (IPC Phase 3) with around 203 000 people in IPC Phase 3 or above, down from 327 000 in April–August 2021.

The most-affected populations countrywide are those displaced by violence as well as poor households in urban and peri-urban areas whose access to food is limited by low purchasing power caused by rising food prices and deteriorating livelihoods (IPC, November 2022).

Drivers of the crisis, 2022–23

Conflict/Insecurity Even though military clashes decreased in intensity between January and September 2022, persisting insecurity and armed violence (including conflicts associated with transhumance) continued to hinder farmers' access to crop-growing areas and agricultural inputs, reflected in the drop in agricultural production (FAO-GIEWS, September 2022).

The activities of armed forces – especially in the northern areas – impeded market access, contributed to rising food and non-food prices, damaged livelihoods and commercial activities, and continued to drive displacement (HNO 2023, November 2022). The reported destruction of livelihoods and productive assets and burning of commercial trucks by armed groups in some areas hampered the access and delivery of humanitarian aid as did the presumed presence of explosive devices in the west and northwest (IPC, September 2022).

From April to August 2023, tensions/violence between transhumance herders and farmers, and between armed groups and transhumance herders, are expected to continue at the same pace (IPC, September 2022).
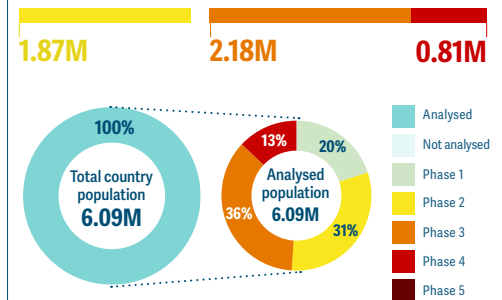
Economic shocks Over the first seven months of 2022, food prices continued to rise as a result of the rising cost of petroleum products and transport of goods, largely related to the war in Ukraine. During the third quarter of 2022, prices of most locally produced and imported food commodities stabilized or decreased – though they were still higher year-on-year by November (WFP, December 2022).

Cameroon's export ban on wheat flour, rice and other food products also contributed to the upward pressure on food prices (FAO-GIEWS, September 2022).
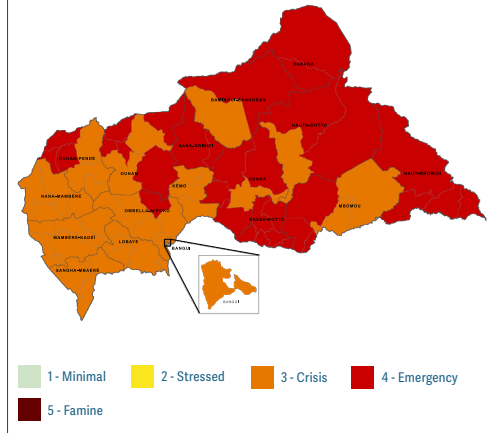
Elevated international prices of fuel and fertilizers reportedly led to a lower use of agricultural inputs in 2022, with a negative impact on yields (FAO-GIEWS, September 2022). Low access to seeds and tools limited household production capacity (IPC, September 2022).

ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY PROJECTION 2023

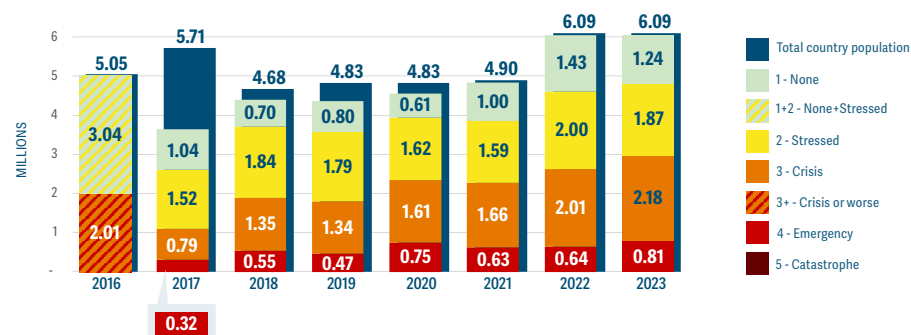**2.99M** people or **49%** of the analysed population in IPC Phase 3 or above, April–August 2023

1.87M   **2.18M**   **0.81M**

100%
Total country population
6.09M

13%
20%
36%
Analysed population
6.09M
31%

Analysed
Not analysed
Phase 1
Phase 2
Phase 3
Phase 4
Phase 5

Projected IPC acute food insecurity situation, April–August 2023

1 - Minimal
2 - Stressed
3 - Crisis
4 - Emergency
5 - Famine

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on these maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Source: Central African Republic IPC TWG, November 2022.

Numbers of people by phase of acute food insecurity, 2016–2023

Legend:
- Total country population
- 1 - None
- 1+2 - None+Stressed
- 2 - Stressed
- 3 - Crisis
- 3+ - Crisis or worse
- 4 - Emergency
- 5 - Catastrophe

See Appendix 1, figure 5 for datasets from all analysis rounds between 2016 and 2023.

Source: Central African Republic IPC TWG.

From April to August 2023, prices of most agricultural products (corn, local rice, palm oil and cassava) will remain as high or higher than in September 2022–March 2023 due to low market availability, the rise in transport costs, insecurity and the state of roads limiting the supply of markets in difficult-to-access areas. The ongoing war in Ukraine could add further inflationary pressure (IPC, September 2022).

Weather extremes From April to August 2023, forecast intense rains are expected to negatively affect second-cycle crops, particularly in the north, east, northwest, Bangui and its surroundings. This would deplete food reserves prematurely, leaving households dependent on the market (IPC, September 2022).

Acute food insecurity since 2016

The Central African Republic has consistently been included as a major food crisis since the first edition of the GRFC and among the report's ten countries with the highest prevalence of its total population in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) each year.

With the exception of the GRFC 2018 referring to 2017, at least 40 percent of its population has been in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) during the peak period each year, peaking at 51 percent in May–August 2020 when the economic impacts of COVID-19 restrictions were particularly severe. These disrupted food supply chains, curbed income-generating opportunities, and pushed up transportation costs and food prices, reducing the purchasing power of already poor households (FSIN, May 2022).

DISPLACEMENT

IDPs living in host communities or displacement sites

72% in host communities

515 665 IDPs

28% in unplanned sites and camp-like settings
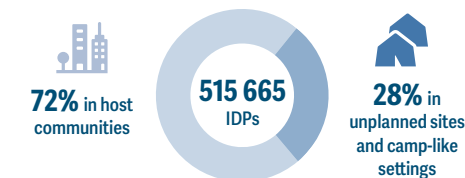
Source: Government of the Central African Republic, December 2022.

IDPs By the end of 2022, more than half a million people were internally displaced in the Central African Republic (UNHCR, February 2023). About a quarter of them were displaced for the first time between January and August 2022 largely due to the increase in military operations in the central, eastern and northeastern parts of the country, and heightened conflicts linked to transhumant movements. In addition, flooding from July led to the temporary displacement of populations, particularly in the urban area of Bangui and in Ombella-M'Poko (IOM DTM, October 2022).

Nearly 100 000 moved for the first time in 2022, including 65 800 displaced between June and August 2022.

The majority were living with host families (72 percent) and around 28 percent in dedicated sites (OCHA, February 2023). The highest numbers were in Ouaka (57 275) followed by Ombella-M'Poko (56 248) and Haute-Kotto (56 126). Around 32 percent of IDPs have been displaced for at least four years (IOM DTM, October 2022).

The main drivers of displacement are armed conflict (53 percent), political crises (25 percent), flooding (9 percent) and intercommunal conflict (8 percent) (IOM, October 2022).

The dominant displacement pattern has been from around major cities to safer cities or villages, or by crossing into border areas of neighbouring countries – Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Chad – at times moving back and forth in a pendular manner.

While the scope and magnitude of internal displacements are expected to reduce slightly in 2023, the already limited service infrastructure in villages and cities considered safe will remain under strain (HNO, November 2022).

Living conditions at IDP sites and with host families are harsh. Host families must share living space and already scarce resources. Both suffer high morbidity levels as latrines are reported to be in poor condition or unusable in almost all the localities hosting IDPs.

The precarious living conditions in the host localities and the improved security situation in some parts of the country are driving IDPs to return to their places of origin. This return is often spontaneous and unassisted, leaving the returnees to rebuild their lives with little or nothing, as their initial displacement often resulted in the loss of their homes and assets. It increases pressure on the already very limited social infrastructure within communities (HNO, November 2022).

The most cited main sources of food in IDP host areas is own agricultural production (96 percent), with at least half having access to land for cultivation in 77 percent of locations. However, IDPs are faced with a lack of seeds, farming tools and financial means, which can affect agricultural production and therefore food access for IDPs (IOM, December 2022).

Other sources of food are hunting, gathering, fishing (62 percent) and market purchases (60 percent). Food assistance (from the government, international organizations and NGOs) constitutes the main source of food for most of the population in 11 percent of localities. This proportion reaches 40 percent in Ouaka and 23 percent in Nana-Gribizi.

Refugees The Central African Republic is a source of refugees rather than a destination country, as prolonged conflict and inter-communal violence have caused refugee outflows to neighbouring countries. Still, it hosts 11 260 refugees, mainly from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (56.7 percent) and South Sudan (23.8 percent). The rest are from Chad, Rwanda and the Sudan. They mainly live in Bangui, Obo, Ndele and Bambari (UNHCR, January 2023).

NUTRITION

Number of **children under 5 years old with wasting**, October 2022–August 2023

212 000
moderately wasted

298 000
children with wasting

86 000
severely wasted

140 600 **pregnant and lactating women acutely malnourished**, 2023

Source: IPC, January 2023.

The acute malnutrition situation deteriorated for both children under 5 years and pregnant and lactating women (PLW) between 2021 and 2022. The number of children suffering from wasting increased from 214 000 in September 2021–August 2022 to 298 000 in October 2022–August 2023, according to an IPC AMN analysis. The number of severely wasted children increased from 67 000 to 86 000, and the number of PLW acutely malnourished from 98 000 to 140 600 (IPC, October 2021; IPC, January 2023).

However, according to the results of the 2022 SMART survey, the acute malnutrition situation at the national level has slightly improved overall since the 2019 SMART survey, with child wasting prevalence decreasing from 9.1 percent to 6.6 percent, still considered a 'medium' prevalence. The nutritional situation of PLW remains very worrying with 9.9 percent acutely malnourished at the national level (IPC, January 2023).

In October 2022–February 2023, one sub-prefecture in Ouham province was classified in Critical (IPC AMN Phase 4) and 15 sub-prefectures and the Nana-Mambéré prefecture were in Serious (IPC AMN Phase 3). During March–August 2023, the situation was projected to deteriorate significantly with ten sub-prefectures moving from IPC AMN Phase 3 to IPC AMN Phase 4 (IPC, January 2023).

Drivers of undernutrition

Food insecurity and lack of access to healthy diets In the Central African Republic, there is greater severity of acute food insecurity than acute malnutrition. The majority of the 17 sub-prefectures classified in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) acute food insecurity have been classified in Serious (IPC AMN Phase 3) acute malnutrition.

This difference in severity is explained by the seasonality of acute food insecurity and malnutrition as well as the timing of the analysis (the food security analysis corresponded to the lean period). The IPC AMN analysis indicates that, while acute food insecurity contributes substantially to acute malnutrition, other factors mitigate the nutritional situation including good prevalence of exclusive breastfeeding of around 80 percent, high coverage of measles vaccinations (above 80 percent) and vitamin A supplementation (IPC, January 2023).

However, deteriorating food security was expected to have a marked negative impact on the nutritional situation in the projection period.

Inadequate maternal and child-feeding practices Poor child-feeding practices beyond weaning lead to insufficient quality and quantity of food intake at the household level. Fewer than 10 percent of children benefited from a Minimum Acceptable Diet in most of the sub-prefectures analysed. This is considered an Extremely Critical level (IPC, January 2023).

Anaemia prevalence for women of reproductive age was estimated nationally at 46.8 percent, a severe public health problem. Among children under 5 years it was as high as 73.6 percent, also indicating a severe public health problem (WHO, 2019).

Poor household environment Inadequate access to safe drinking water and poor hygiene conditions (inadequate sanitation) contribute to the high prevalence of childhood diseases – notably diarrhoea, acute respiratory infections and measles outbreaks. At the national level, 30 percent of the population uses an unimproved water source or surface water (HNO, January 2023).

Access to sanitation remains a concern as more than 22 percent of households resort to open defecation.

This proportion reaches or exceeds 40 percent in the sub-prefectures of Bakala, Kabo, Kaga Bandoro, Kouango, Mala, Markounda and Nana-Boguila. Floods could worsen access to water and sanitation (IPC, January 2023).

High prevalence of infectious diseases The southeast is highly vulnerable to disease outbreaks given the trade and community ties with areas in the Democratic Republic of the Congo where the Ebola virus disease (EVD) is recurrent. In 2023, floods will likely continue to create an environment conducive to these epidemics, particularly in Ouango, Rafaï and Bangassou. The risk of epidemics linked to preventable diseases is also high in the northwest – where many health centres are no longer supplied with vaccines and are deserted by health workers (HNO, January 2023).

Limited access to health and nutrition services Conflict and insecurity continue to have a major negative impact on basic services, which were already inadequate and further reducing the coverage of nutritional interventions. Insecurity and lack of infrastructure makes it difficult for households to access nutritional assistance and prevention activities. Due to structural deficits, the health system is unlikely to be able to respond to epidemics, including EVD and waterborne and infectious diseases (HNO, January 2023).
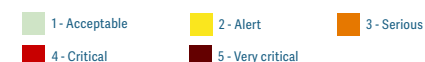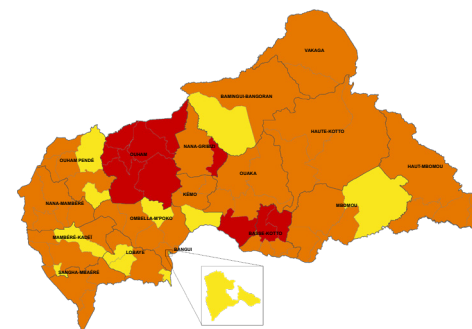
IPC acute malnutrition situation, October 2022–February 2023
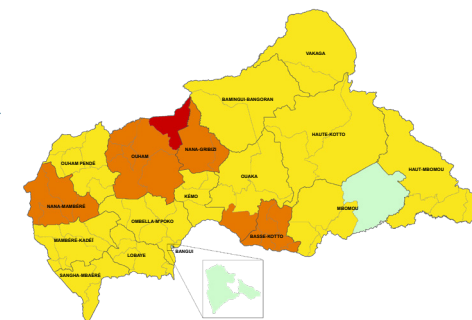
1 - Acceptable   2 - Alert   3 - Serious
4 - Critical   5 - Very critical

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on these maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.
Source: Central African Republic IPC TWG, January 2023.

Projected IPC acute malnutrition situation, March–August 2023

1 - Acceptable   2 - Alert   3 - Serious
4 - Critical   5 - Very critical

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Source: Central African Republic IPC TWG, January 2023.