**drivers of the crisis, 2022–23**

- **Weather extremes** The failure of the 2022 March–May Gu rains followed by poor October–December Deyr rains exacerbated drought conditions that began in late 2020, resulting in severe crop and livestock losses in Somali, Oromia, Sidama and SNNP regions (FAO, December 2022). Almost 7 million animals, belonging to about 600 000 households and valued at over USD1.5 billion, have died since the beginning of the drought in 2020. An estimated 60 000 pastoralist households have lost all their livestock, resulting in pronounced human suffering (FAO, 2023). Minimal livestock reproduction led to limited milk production, impacting food security and nutrition, particularly for children (FEWS NET, October 2022). Livestock prices also increased as the prolonged drought reduced the availability of marketable live animals (FAO-GIEWS, August 2022).

- **While some drought-affected areas received good rains between October and December 2022, the amount of water was insufficient for the regeneration of pasture and the replenishment of water resources. Earlier forecasts for the March–May 2023 rainfall season had pointed to depressed rainfall, coupled with high temperatures, risking a sixth consecutive season of drought. However, improved rainfall in drought-affected areas from mid-March 2022 provided temporary solace through replenished surface water sources and rejuvenated pasture – though not enough for the restoration of livelihoods, which will take time. Heavy rains in some areas caused floods leading to destruction of shelter/houses and public infrastructures, livestock death, and further displacements (FSNWG, March 2023; OCHA, April 2023).**

- **Conflict insecurity** The conflict in Tigray and adjacent areas of Amhara and Afar regions has led to high levels of acute food insecurity, widespread displacement, limited access to services and the destruction of the local economy. Shortages of inputs in conflict-affected areas constrained planting for the main June–September 2022 Meher season (FAO-GIEWS, August 2022). The humanitarian truce announced in March 2022 improved humanitarian access into the region from early April, but conflict erupted again in late August, contributing to delays in delivery of humanitarian assistance (FAO-GIEWS, August 2022). Intense conflict in October coincided with the Meher harvest, causing disruptions to harvest activities and further hampering market functionality (FEWS NET, December 2022).

- **Since the November 2022 peace agreement, conflict episodes have become more sporadic, allowing for increased humanitarian access and the re-establishment of basic services. However, the security situation remained volatile, and in February and March 2023, plantings of secondary Belg crops, for harvesting in June and July, are also likely to have been constrained (FAO-GIEWS, March 2023). Recovery of severely eroded livelihoods and the economy in Tigray, Afar and Amhara is not likely to occur quickly due to the long-term nature of the conflict, the heavy damage to infrastructure, markets and livelihoods, and exhaustion of coping mechanisms (FEWS NET, December 2022).**

- **Economic shocks** Ethiopia continued to face severe macroeconomic challenges, including a large debt burden, high government spending, rising import bills, insufficient foreign currency reserves and continuous national currency depreciation, which contributed to increased costs of living and to the erosion of household purchasing power (WFP, October 2022). Inflation soared to very high levels in 2022, with food inflation estimated at 43.3 percent in May – the highest recorded in the past nine years. Prices of locally produced maize have increased near-continuously throughout 2022 and were about 20 percent higher than their year-earlier levels in October. Prices of imported wheat and vegetable oils were at near-record to record levels, due to high international prices exacerbated by the war in Ukraine (FAQ, December 2022).
Chapter 3 | Major food crises in 2022 | Ethiopia

Ethiopia hosts the third-largest population of refugees and asylum-seekers in Africa, at over 882 000 people, predominantly from South Sudan, Somalia and Eritrea. The majority (88 percent) live in camps (mainly Gambella bordering South Sudan, and Melkadida near Somalia), with only 3 percent living in settlements and 9 percent residing in the capital Addis Ababa. Around 82 percent are women and children. In 2022, over 22 000 new arrivals were registered, mainly from Somalia and South Sudan (UNHCR, December 2022).

Acute food insecurity in Ethiopia's refugee camps is concerning, with 46 percent of surveyed households recording poor food consumption scores and 25 percent facing borderline food consumption. Around 65 percent of households use negative coping strategies, including reducing or skipping meals, consuming less-preferred foods and borrowing food for survival (SENS, 2022).

During 2022, key nutrition indicators further deteriorated in refugee camps in Gambella and Melkadida, due to the combined effects of food ration cuts, increased food prices, disease outbreaks, drought impacts and a critical nutrition situation among new arrivals from South Sudan and Somalia (UNHCR, December 2022).

In 2022, UNHCR assessments found a ‘high’ to ‘very high’ prevalence of wasting in 15 out of 20 refugee settlements. Four camps out of 20 had a ‘medium’ level of wasting, while only one settlement had a ‘low’ level. Overall, there was an increase in the prevalence of wasting from 12.2 percent in 2021 to 15.5 percent in 2022. The prevalence of severe wasting rose from 1.8 percent to 2.9 percent (UNHCR, December 2022).

Stunting levels are also ‘high’, with 11 out of 20 refugee settlements having ‘high’ to ‘very high’ levels. Anaemia is a severe public health problem (~40 percent) for children aged 6–59 months in 11 out of 20 settlements and for women aged 15–49 years in six out of 20 settlements (UNHCR, December 2022).

In February 2023, more than 83 000 people (mostly women, children and elderly people) reportedly arrived in a dire state in the Somali region, having fled from Lasanood in neighbouring Somaliland. They were in urgent need of food, nutrition, water, health response, shelter and protection (OCHA, February 2023).

### NUTRITION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of children under 5 years old with wasting, 2022</th>
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<tr>
<td>3.59M moderately wasted</td>
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The number of wasted children increased by 14 percent from 4.2 million in 2021 to 4.8 million in 2022. The number of severely wasted children also increased: from 1.1 million to 1.2 million (GNC, February 2022).

Various assessments in 2022 reported high levels of malnutrition. The Find and Treat campaign implemented in most of the woredas in Somali and Oromia reported proxy wasting levels above 15 percent (GNC, 2022). The nutrition situation was extremely concerning in drought- and conflict-affected northern areas (Tigray, Afar and Amhara), reflected in the highest wasting admissions for the past three years (UNICEF, 2022). In the Oromia, Somali, Amhara, Tigray and SNNP regions, more cases of wasted children are expected in 2023 (FSNWG, October 2022 update). It is estimated that 7.4 million people will need nutrition assistance in 2023 (OCHA, February 2023).

Stunting rates for children under 5 years old are ‘very high’ according to the WHO classification, with 37 percent prevalence, equating to 5.8 million children (UNICEF, July 2022).

### Drivers of undernutrition

**Food insecurity and lack of access to healthy diets**

Inadequate food consumption in terms of quality and variety leading to nutrient intake deficits is a significant factor in the poor nutrition situation.

**Inadequate maternal and child-feeding practices**

Inadequate infant and child-feeding practices led to high consumption of monotonous starchy diets and poor consumption of iron-rich animal-sourced foods such as milk, meat and eggs. Only 11 percent of children aged 6–23 months eat a Minimum Acceptable Diet (MAD) which meets both the recommended dietary diversity and frequency thresholds in Ethiopia.

About 59 percent of children aged under 6 months are exclusively breastfed (UNICEF, October 2021). More than half (52.1 percent) of children aged 6–59 months are anaemic, indicating a severe public health problem (WHO, 2019). Around 24 percent of women of reproductive age (15–49 years) are anaemic (UNICEF, October 2021), indicating a moderate public health problem (WHO, 2019).

In Tigray, while breastfeeding practices are generally optimal, inadequate complementary feeding is widespread (WFP, Emergency Food Security Assessment, August 2022). Only 1.3 percent of children aged 6–23 months are receiving the MAD.

**High prevalence of infectious diseases**

Ongoing disease outbreaks in certain regions have contributed to the increase in malnutrition. A cholera outbreak that started in August 2022 in Oromia has spread to Somali (OCHA, Cholera outbreak update January 2023).

The persistent lack of clean water supply adds to the risk of contracting the disease. In addition, there is a measles outbreak in Oromia, SNNP, Afar, Amhara and Somali, while malaria is worsening the already grave situation (UNICEF, 2022).