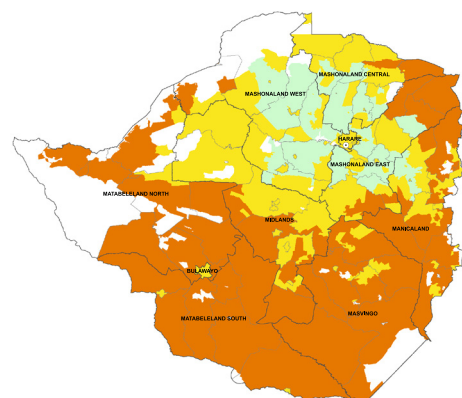


Zimbabwe

ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY PEAK 2022

 **3.0M** people or **20%** of the analysed population in IPC Phase 3 or above, **October–December 2022**

IPC acute food insecurity situation, October–December 2022




■ 1 - Minimal
 ■ 2 - Stressed
 ■ 3 - Crisis
 ■ 4 - Emergency
■ 5 - Famine
 □ Not analysed
 ○ Urban settlement classification

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

Source: FEWS NET, October 2022.

Food crisis overview

 In October–December 2022, even before the height of the lean season, which usually finishes in March, 3 million people were in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above), representing 20 percent of the total population (FEWS NET, internal analysis, October 2022).

The numbers are not fully comparable with the GRFC 2021 peak figure, due to a change in the geographical coverage and data source. However, the situation improved in 2022 compared with FEWS NET's January–March 2021 peak analysis, when 5 million people were in IPC Phase 3 or above.

The annual Zimbabwean Government-led rural livelihood assessment estimated that 38 percent of households were unable to access an adequate quantity of cereals in 2022, up from 27 percent in 2021, but below the 2020 level of 56 percent (ZimVAC, April 2022).

Continued high levels of acute food insecurity in early 2023

Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are expected to intensify throughout the lean season in early 2023 in typical deficit-producing areas in the south, east, west and far north (FEWS NET, October 2022). Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes are expected to prevail in surplus-producing northern districts and urban areas. With the start of harvests in April/May 2023, household food access will improve (FEWS NET, December 2022).


Acute food insecurity since 2016

Zimbabwe has been identified as a major food crisis since the first edition of the GRFC due to weather extremes and, increasingly, economic shocks. For the past seven years, around 3.5 million people have faced IPC Phase 3 or equivalent on average.

The numbers of acutely food-insecure people in need of urgent assistance are not fully comparable over the

years, given differences in the geographical coverage and data sources. The analysis coverage has remained at around 65 percent until 2022, when the whole country was analysed. Some 45 percent of the rural population were in IPC Phase 3 or above in 2020, which marked the worst year for Zimbabwe in the history of the GRFC, when the number of people in these phases reached 4.3 million, with over 1 million of them in Emergency (IPC Phase 4).

Drivers of the crisis, 2022–23

 **Economic shocks** The monthly official food inflation rate increased steeply in 2022, with the country experiencing triple-digit inflation rates since April 2022, underpinned by a sharp depreciation of the national currency, which amplified the effect of rising and high international food and fuel prices (FAO FPMA, June 2022).

The lower domestic harvest in 2022 contributed to pushing up prices further, although the lifting of the import ban on maize helped shore up domestic availabilities and, in part, eased supply pressure on prices (FAO FPMA, June 2022).

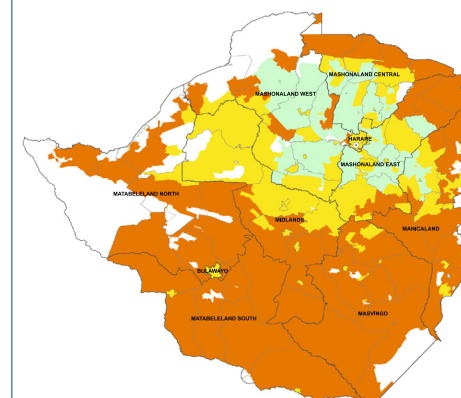
In August, food prices were 353 percent higher year-on-year (FAO FPMA, September 2022). A number of Government measures introduced to curb inflationary pressure, including the removal of import duties on several key food commodities, such as cooking oil, maize meal and rice, between May and October 2022, as well as a relative stabilization of the exchange rate and some softening of international prices, slowed food inflation somewhat, and by February 2023 the annual rate of inflation was estimated to be just below 140 percent (FAO FPMA, March 2023).

Throughout the main 2022/23 agricultural season, access to crop inputs, such as fertilizer, was expected to be significantly below normal, due to above-average prices (FEWS NET, October 2022). Fuel prices marginally decreased since the peak in June 2022, but remained above average and still the highest in southern Africa (FEWS NET, October 2022).

ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY PROJECTION 2023

 **3.0–3.5M** people or **19–23%** of the analysed population in IPC Phase 3 or above equivalent, **January–March 2023**

Projected IPC acute food insecurity situation, January–March 2023



■ 1 - Minimal
 ■ 2 - Stressed
 ■ 3 - Crisis
 ■ 4 - Emergency
■ 5 - Famine
 □ Not analysed
 ○ Urban settlement classification

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Source: FEWS NET, February 2023.

The economic crisis also lowered domestic work opportunities in better-off households (FEWS NET, October 2022). In April 2022, average household monthly income was USD 57, which is USD 18 lower than the previous April, with the lowest reported in Matabeleland North (USD 38) (ZimVAC, April 2022).



Weather extremes The 2021/2022 season started late in most parts of the country, and the rainfall was poorly distributed across the country (MoA, April 2022). By February 2022, the harvest was already expected to be below average (FEWS NET, February 2022), and production of the main staple, maize, was estimated to be 43 percent below that of the previous season, but only 6 percent down from the five-year average (MoA, April 2022). More than 80 percent of households were affected by drought in the central and eastern part of the country (ZimVAC, April 2022). Below-average 2022 harvests and crop sales dampened labour opportunities and rates in October 2022.

Generally well-distributed rains in early 2023 are expected to improve labour opportunities, livestock conditions and sales and to result in a near-average cereal harvest at the national level, but reduced outputs were likely in the south due to prolonged dry spells (FEWS NET, January 2023).



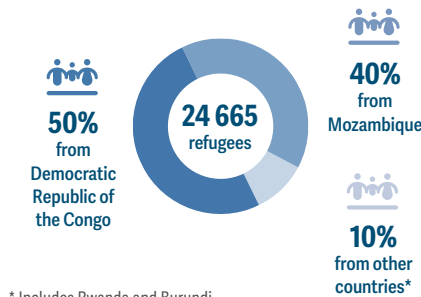
Refugees Zimbabwe hosts around 24 000 refugees and asylum-seekers with most of them living in Tongogara camp in Manicaland province, southeastern Zimbabwe. Half are from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, while others come from Mozambique, Burundi, Rwanda and other countries.

Regarding the food security situation of refugee populations, the most recent SENS 2021 analysis found that nearly all (95 percent) of refugee households rely on WFP assistance as their main source of food. The study found that 21.5 percent of refugee households in Tongogara camp had borderline food consumption and 9.4 percent poor food consumption (SENS, July 2021).

In Tongogara camp, 3 percent of children under 5 years old were found to have wasting, which is considered a low prevalence. At 18.6 percent, stunting in the camp was considered of medium concern. Access to nutritious, iron-rich diets for refugee households was also a problem, with SENS data reporting that anaemia was at a

DISPLACEMENT

Refugees and asylum-seekers, 2022



* Includes Rwanda and Burundi.
Source: UNHCR, 31 December 2022.

‘medium’ level in children under 5 years old (34 percent), and in women of reproductive age (27.9 percent). The exclusive breastfeeding target of 75 percent has not been met, with only 63.3 percent of infants under 6 months old exclusively breastfed (SENS 2021).

NUTRITION



The prevalence of wasting among children under 5 years old has increased since 2021 from 2.9 percent to 7.2 percent – classified as a ‘medium’ public health emergency by WHO thresholds. It reached a ‘high’ prevalence in Mashonaland Central and Matabeleland South (11 percent) (ZimVAC, August 2022).

The proportion of children with severe wasting was very concerning. At the national level, the severe wasting prevalence was 4 percent, reaching 8 percent in Mashonaland Central, 6 percent in Matabeleland South and 5 percent in Manicaland. Almost 20 000 children under 5 years old had severe wasting in 2022. In 2023, this number is projected to decrease to 12 700 (ZimVAC, August 2022).

Nationally, stunting (26.7 percent) remains ‘high’ with all provinces recording a stunting prevalence surpassing the WHO ‘high’ threshold of 20 percent. Matabeleland North had the highest prevalence (35.3 percent) and Masvingo (22.9 percent) the lowest (ZimVAC, August 2022).

Drivers of undernutrition



Food insecurity and lack of access to healthy diets Inadequate food consumption in terms of quantity and variety leading to nutrient intake deficits is a significant contributing factor to child undernutrition, with households living mainly on cereals, oils and vegetables. Only 35 percent of households consumed ‘acceptable’ diets (as per the Food Consumption Score indicator) in 2022 – although this was an improvement on 2021 (29 percent). Hwange (92 percent) and Hurungwe (72 percent) districts had the highest proportion of households consuming ‘poor’ diets. About 13 percent of households reported experiencing moderate to severe hunger (as per the Household Hunger Scale), and at least 29 percent of households were engaging high coping strategies (as per Household Consumption Coping Strategy Index) (ZimVAC, August 2022).

The daily consumption of iron-rich, animal-sourced foods, such as milk, meat and eggs, remained low in 2022, with 41 percent of households never consuming them (ZimVAC, August 2022).



Inadequate maternal and child-feeding practices Few children (7 percent) aged 6–23 months old are fed a Minimum Acceptable Diet (MAD) that meets both the recommended dietary diversity and frequency thresholds (UNICEF, 2020).

While 61.6 percent of children are breastfed beyond one year according to the ZimVAC survey, exclusive breastfeeding of babies under 6 months old is concerning at 42 percent (UNICEF, 2020).

According to the latest available data, nearly 38 percent of children aged 6–59 months and 29 percent of women of reproductive age (15–49 years) were anaemic (UNICEF, 2020), indicating a ‘moderate’ public health problem (WHO, 2019).



Poor household environment Nationally, 22 percent of rural households were using unimproved water sources, rising to 31 percent in Masvingo and 27 percent in Matabeleland South. At least 13 percent of households in Matabeleland South and 11 percent in Matabeleland North were consuming surface water.

Lack of sanitation is a nutrition concern, with 33 percent of rural households having no access to improved sanitation and 27 percent practising open defecation nationally, reaching 50 percent in Matabeleland North (ZimVAC, July 2022).



High prevalence of infectious diseases At least 37 percent of children had experienced cough and 25 percent fever in the two weeks preceding the survey. About 12 percent of households have to travel more than 10 kilometres to reach the nearest health facility. The proportion is highest in Matabeleland North (18 percent) (ZimVAC, July 2022).