

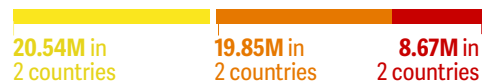
Asia

Afghanistan | Bangladesh (Cox's Bazar) | Myanmar | Pakistan (Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh) | Sri Lanka

Widespread economic shocks, conflict and devastating weather extremes drove high levels of acute food insecurity in five countries in the region in 2022

51.3M people or **36%** of the analysed population faced high levels of acute food insecurity in 2022 in five countries

28.52M of them were in the two countries with IPC analyses, Afghanistan and Pakistan



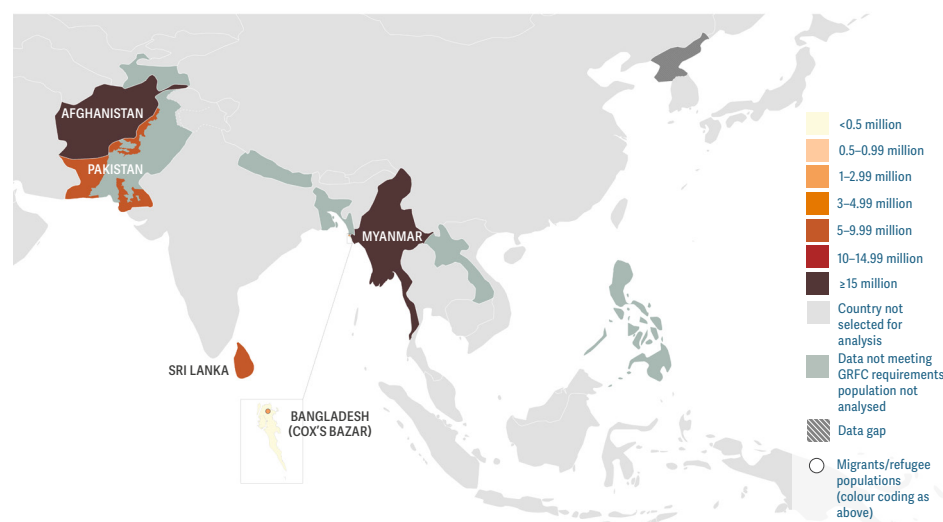
In Afghanistan, no populations were in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) during November 2022–March 2023 peak period, but there were over 20 000 people in this phase in March–May 2022 (IPC, May 2022).

Source: HNO 2023 (Afghanistan); Pakistan IPC TWG, 2022.

22.75M people faced high levels of acute food insecurity in Bangladesh (Cox's Bazar), Myanmar and Sri Lanka

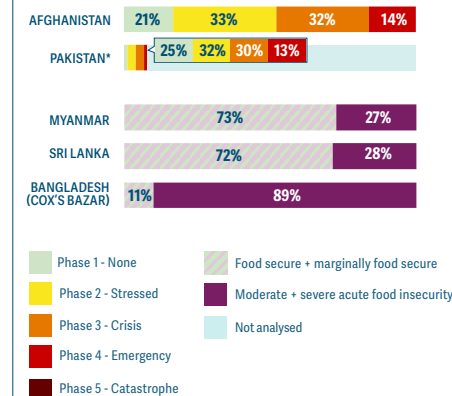
Source: JRP, 2023 (Bangladesh) based on ENA; HNO 2023 (Myanmar) based on rCARI; FAO/WFP, 2022 (Sri Lanka) based on WFP CARI.

Numbers of people in IPC Phase 3 or above or equivalent, 2022



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on these maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.
Source: IPC TWGs, 2022; HNO 2023 (Afghanistan and Myanmar); JRP, 2023 (Bangladesh); WFP CARI, 2022 (Sri Lanka).

Share of analysed population by phase of acute food insecurity, 2022



* Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh provinces.

Source: IPC TWGs, 2022 (Afghanistan and Pakistan); JRP, 2023 (Bangladesh) based on ENA; HNO 2023 (Myanmar) based on rCARI; FAO/WFP, 2022 (Sri Lanka) based on WFP CARI.

10 countries in this region were selected for inclusion.

Five countries had data gaps/evidence not meeting the GRFC requirements: Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Nepal, Philippines and Tajikistan.

The five remaining countries included in the GRFC 2023 are major food crises (listed above).

In 2022, around 51 million people faced high levels of acute food insecurity in five major food-crisis countries in Asia. The increase in those countries from almost 29 million in 2021 was largely due to the inclusion of Myanmar and Sri Lanka and their categorization as major food crises for the first time in the GRFC, together accounting for over 21 million people facing high levels of acute food insecurity in 2022.

Afghanistan was Asia's largest food crisis, accounting for 39 percent of the region's population in the highest phases of acute food insecurity, followed by Myanmar, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh.

In terms of severity, all five major food-crisis countries had more than quarter of their analysed populations in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) or equivalent. The highest share was in Afghanistan, where almost half (46 percent) of the total population faced high levels of acute food insecurity followed by Sri Lanka (28 percent) and Myanmar (27 percent).

The analysis for Pakistan only covered 9 percent of the country's population, of whom 43 percent were in IPC Phase 3 or above. The analysis for Bangladesh covered the Rohingya refugees and host community in Cox's Bazar, representing 1 percent of the country's

population, and found that 89 percent of them faced moderate or severe acute food insecurity.

Regional comparison with the previous year is limited to the three countries where data were also available in 2021 – Afghanistan, the three provinces of Pakistan and Bangladesh (Cox's Bazar). In Afghanistan, there was a decrease of 2.9 million people facing high levels of acute food insecurity to 19.9 million people, largely thanks to scaled-up efforts of humanitarian partners during the March–May lean season (HNO, 2023). In Pakistan, in the last quarter of 2022, the number of people in IPC Phase 3 or above reached 8.6 million in Balochistan,

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh, nearly double that of the 2021 peak, largely due to the impact of floods on food production, prices and livelihoods and partially explained also by an increase of 1.2 million in the analysed population (IPC, December 2022). The number of Rohingya refugees estimated to face high levels of acute food insecurity in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, has remained similar each year (1.28 million in 2022) since more than 700 000 sought refuge there in 2017 (JRP, March 2023).

Drivers of the crisis, 2022–23

Economic shocks were the primary driver in Afghanistan – shifting from conflict for the first time in the history of the GRFC – and in Sri Lanka. In these countries, 26.18 million people faced high levels of acute food insecurity.

Afghanistan's conflict-driven economic crisis has deepened since the Taliban took control in August 2021, prompting the freezing of foreign financial reserves, which limited the country's capacity to import food and other basic supplies and contributed to sharply rising food, fuel and fertilizer costs, while household incomes fell due to lack of income-generating opportunities and limitations on women's employment.

In Sri Lanka, two years of economic turmoil were aggravated by the impacts of the war in Ukraine. Strong national currency depreciation coupled with dwindling foreign currency reserves curtailed the country's capacity to import fuel, food and agricultural inputs, causing acute shortages, lower agricultural production and spikes in the prices of essential products (FAO/WFP, September 2022).

Annual food price inflation rates, December 2022

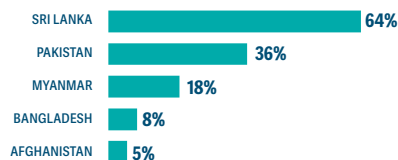


Figure for Myanmar as of July 2022. Source: WFP Economic Explorer, accessed 14 March 2023.

Economic shocks were a major driver of acute food insecurity in Myanmar and Pakistan too due to loss of jobs, currency devaluation and rampant inflation, aggravated by the war in Ukraine and conflict in Myanmar.

Conflict/insecurity was the primary driver of acute food insecurity in Bangladesh and Myanmar, where a total of 16.5 million people in both countries faced high levels of acute food insecurity. Worsening and widespread insecurity, mass displacement and movement restrictions on people throughout 2022 affected their ability to make a living or produce or access food (HNO 2023, January 2023).

While the overall security environment in Afghanistan improved in 2022, with the end of major hostilities and the consolidation of control by the de facto authorities (DFA), pockets of armed clashes and violence persisted, affecting livelihoods and access to basic services, and undermining the coping capacities of a population scarred by decades of conflict (HNO 2023, January 2023).

Weather extremes were the primary driver of acute food insecurity in Pakistan where 8.6 million were in IPC Phase 3 or above.

Abnormal monsoon rainfall – nearly three times higher than the 30-year average – caused flash floods and landslides that affected more than 33 million people (IFRC, October 2022) causing widespread devastation in the agricultural and livestock sectors. Before the floods, heatwaves in March and April 2022 had affected 'Rabi' wheat crop yields (FAO-GIEWS, October 2022) and lowered livestock production (IPC, December 2022).

Weather extremes were the secondary but still significant driver of acute food insecurity in Afghanistan where 25 out of 34 provinces reported either severe or catastrophic drought conditions, contributing to the 2022 cereal output being about 12 percent below the five-year average (FAO, December 2022). Unseasonal flooding between July and September in 21 provinces disrupted agricultural livelihoods and damaged crops before harvest (HNO 2023, January 2023).

In Myanmar, torrential monsoon rains and flash flooding during the wet season further exposed crisis-affected and displaced people to loss of their livelihood sources (HNO 2023, January 2023).



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From June–October 2022, devastating flooding during the monsoon in Pakistan affected more than 33 million people and caused widespread destruction in the agricultural and livestock sectors.

Acute food insecurity projections, 2023

Projections for 2023 are largely unavailable for countries in the region but economic malaise including high food, fertilizer and fuel prices – along with transport and supply chain disruptions, devalued currencies and limited resources to respond to increasing social and economic demands – will continue to drive regional food insecurity.

There could be rising risks of civil unrest and riots over food and other resources (WFP, January 2023). Weather extremes, conflict in Myanmar and the repercussions of decades of conflict in Afghanistan will remain important drivers.

In Afghanistan, high levels of acute food insecurity are projected to remain at similar levels in early 2023. The analysis covered the period from November 2022–March 2023 with an estimated 19.9 million people in IPC Phase 3 or above, or 46 percent of the population, due to the simultaneous effects of winter and the lean season, sustained high food prices, reduced income

and unemployment, and continued economic decline (HNO 2023, January 2023).

No acute food insecurity projection data are available for Myanmar, but conflict dynamics are expected to remain at the same level or worse in 2023, especially in the northwest and southeast as well as across various parts of Rakhine, with continued new and protracted displacement extremely likely (HNO 2023, January 2023).

In Sri Lanka, there are concerns that small-scale and commercial farmers may significantly reduce the area planted with paddy during the 2022/23 'Maha' season if the elevated costs of agricultural inputs prevail or increase further (FAO/WFP, September 2022).

In Pakistan, due to higher domestic energy prices, flood disruptions, high agricultural input costs and the weaker rupee, inflation is projected to rise to 23 percent in the year to the end of June 2023. A damage, loss and needs assessment estimated total flood damages to exceed USD 14.9 billion (WB, October 2022).

Acute food insecurity since 2016

A lack of data limits a more thorough regional analysis over time, as the number of countries selected for analysis and with acute food insecurity data available varied significantly year-on-year in the seven editions of the GRFC.

Only two countries in Asia have been consistently included as food crises in each edition of the GRFC – Afghanistan and Bangladesh – where the number of people in IPC Phase 3 or above or equivalent increased from 8.6 million to 21.1 million between 2020 and 2021, driven largely by Afghanistan’s worsening situation and changes in its base population estimates.

Afghanistan has always been classified as one of the ten worst food crises, with conflict/insecurity and drought as the main drivers. However, given the year-to-year difference in the number of people analysed, it is difficult to compare acute food insecurity levels across years, although in terms of severity, they have clearly deteriorated, with the proportion of people in IPC Phase 3 or above increasing from around 37 percent in 2019 to around 46 percent in 2022. In terms of area classification, the situation has deteriorated from no area classified in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) in 2016 to 17 in 2022.

Pakistan has been defined as a ‘major’ food crisis since 2017 when almost 3 million people representing 50 percent of the population in drought-affected districts of Balochistan and Sindh were in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above). Low numbers of acutely food-insecure people in the past few years can be partly attributed to low geographical coverage. It became the ninth largest food crisis globally in 2021.

Sri Lanka has been selected for inclusion in the GRFC each year except 2019. However, acute food insecurity estimates were available only in 2017 and 2022.

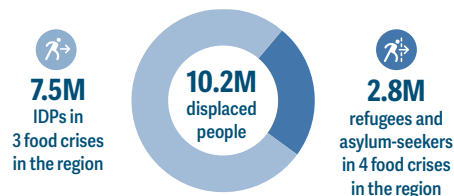
For the Rohingya refugee and host community populations in Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh, changing analytical approaches and coverage challenge year-on-year comparisons, though numbers have remained at almost the same levels since 2018.

Many countries in the region that have been selected for inclusion in the report have had consistent data

gaps including Kyrgyzstan, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Nepal (data only for GRFC 2017 and 2018), the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (data only available in GRFC 2017) and Tajikistan.

DISPLACEMENT

Number of forcibly displaced people, in four food-crisis countries, 2022



Source: UNHCR; IOM, December, 2022.

IDPs Of the 7.5 million IDPs in three food crises in the region, about 5.9 million were in Afghanistan, where the push factors shifted in 2022 from conflict to unemployment and poverty, followed by drought/rainfall deficits, and floods (WoAA, September 2022).

By the end of 2022, there were 1.5 million IDPs in Myanmar, of whom nearly 1.2 million were newly displaced by armed conflict and unrest since 1 February 2021. By the end of December, the number of IDPs in the northwest was five times that of early January (HNO 2023, January 2023).

In Sindh province of Pakistan, in December 2022 over 90 000 people were still living with host communities, or in tent cities and relief camps, months after flooding between June and August reportedly displaced around 8 million (OCHA, January 2023).

Refugees Nearly 2.8 million registered refugees are hosted in three countries in the region. There are around 1.78 million registered Afghans in Pakistan – one of the largest displaced populations in the world – with the number of arrivals increasing since the change of the regime in August 2021 (IOM, January 2023). Nearly 952 400 Rohingya refugees who escaped violence in Myanmar live in huge, overcrowded camps in Cox’s Bazar in Bangladesh. Approximately 52 300 refugees live in

Afghanistan, the vast majority of them displaced by conflict in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in Pakistan in 2014, and residing in Khost and Paktika provinces in the southeastern region.

NUTRITION

Number of children under 5 years old with wasting in three major food crises, 2022



Source: IPC (Afghanistan and Pakistan); HNO 2023 (Myanmar).

Out of the five food-crisis countries in the region, three had recent data on acute malnutrition: Afghanistan, Myanmar and Pakistan.

Most of the children under 5 years old suffering wasting in the region were in Afghanistan, where the number was estimated at 3.22 million, of whom about 875 000 were severely wasted. In addition, there were over 800 000 pregnant and lactating women suffering acute malnutrition and in need of urgent treatment (IPC, January 2023).

In Myanmar, about 290 000 children under 5 years old were wasted, including nearly 50 000 severely wasted (HNO 2023, December 2022).

In eight out of nine analysed districts of Sindh province in Pakistan, between April 2021 and February 2022 wasting levels were Critical (IPC AMN Phase 4) with 636 000 children under 5 years old estimated to be suffering from wasting, of whom 126 000 were severely wasted. In addition, nearly 38 000 pregnant and lactating women were acutely malnourished and in urgent need of treatment (IPC, October 2021). Following the unprecedented floods between June and October 2022, the acute malnutrition situation is expected to have worsened exponentially as around 4 million children were still living near contaminated and stagnant flood

waters in early January 2023, raising the risk of infectious diseases (UNICEF, January 2023).

In Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh, data from 2021 SENS surveys already reported high wasting levels (10–15 percent) among Rohingya refugee children aged under 5 years living in the camps (UNICEF, March 2023). Ration cuts from March 2023 will likely reduce nutrient intake and put vulnerable people – especially young children and pregnant and lactating women – at increased risk of malnutrition and anaemia (MSF, March 2023).

High levels of child wasting (13.2 percent) recorded in Sri Lanka in 2021 were likely to have worsened in 2022 as the country’s severe economic crisis likely limited access to healthy and nutritious diets and poor nutrient intake (Medical Research Institute, January 2022). As of April 2022, the monthly cost of a nutritious diet (per household) increased by 156 percent (OCHA, October 2022), while nutrition supplements targeting wasted children and pregnant and lactating women were temporarily discontinued. While school meals were also discontinued or reduced in size, with improvement in the economic situation and bilateral and multilateral aid, much of the supplemental feeding and school feeding was back on track in 2023.