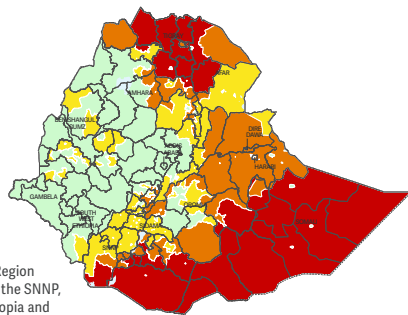


ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY | Ethiopia remains one of the most severe food crises due to the persistence of drought conditions, macroeconomic challenges and internal conflict.

PEAK 2023 (AUGUST–SEPTEMBER)

19.7M people or **17%** of the total population faced high levels of acute food insecurity, with the worst conditions being recorded in the southern, southeastern and northern regions of Afar, Amhara, Central Ethiopia, Oromia, Somali, Sidama, SNNP and Tigray.

The situation was particularly severe for pastoralists who have few livestock holdings and income-generating activities after the 2020–2023 drought and 2020–2022 conflict.



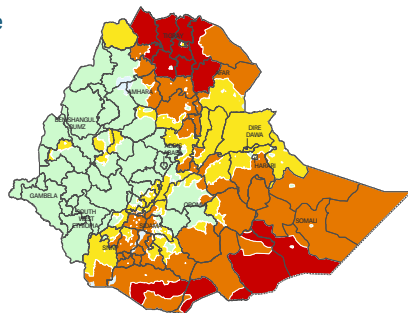
In August 2023, the South Ethiopia Region referendum led to the dissolution of the SNNP, and the establishment of South Ethiopia and Central Ethiopia regional states.

Source: FEWS NET, August 2023.

PROJECTION 2024 (JUNE)

Up to 18M people or **16%** of the total population are projected to experience high levels of acute food insecurity in June 2024.

Although lower than the 2023 peak, populations are projected in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) and Emergency (IPC Phase 4) at the start of the lean season in Tigray, Afar and Amhara (FEWS NET, December 2023). Coping capacities have been eroded by conflict and drought-driven decreased agricultural productivity, leaving populations with depleted stocks and fewer income sources.



In August 2023, the South Ethiopia Region referendum led to the dissolution of the SNNP, and the establishment of South Ethiopia and Central Ethiopia regional states.

Source: FEWS NET, December 2023.



DRIVERS OF THE CRISIS 2023–2024

Weather extremes In southern Oromia and southern Somali pastoral areas, favourable March–May 2023 Gu/Genna rains regenerated rangeland resources and marked the end of the severe late 2020–early 2023 drought. Although milk production generally increased, it remained below average due to low conception rates and 4.5 million livestock deaths during the drought (FAO-GIEWS, June 2023).

In western crop-producing areas, insufficient rains in some areas during the main June–September 2023 Kiremt rains resulted in localized shortfalls in cereal production (FAO-GIEWS, November 2023).

Exceptionally abundant Deyr/Hageya rains from October to December, mainly due to El Niño and positive Indian Ocean Dipole conditions, triggered widespread floods, which destroyed infrastructure, croplands and income sources, and displaced 0.6 million people (OCHA, November 2023). In northern pastoral areas (Afar) drought conditions have substantially impacted the

availability of livestock products, diminishing livelihood opportunities for farmers and herders at a time when they were still recovering from conflict in Tigray (FEWS NET, October 2023).

Conflict/insecurity The signing of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement by the Government of Ethiopia and the Tigray People’s Liberation Front in November 2022 improved the security situation and allowed the economies in Tigray, Amhara and Afar to begin a gradual recovery (FAO-GIEWS, June 2023). However, violence returned in August 2023 in localized areas of Oromia and Amhara, which displaced populations and disrupted typical livelihood and economic activities (ACLED, September 2023).

Economic shocks Double-digit headline inflation, continuing currency depreciation and growing debt repayments contributed to higher food prices at a time when many people were market dependent (FEWS NET, June 2023; UNDP, April 2023). High fuel prices,

as well as several seasons of below-average harvests for key staples (maize, sorghum and teff) from drought and localized conflicts, put additional inflationary pressure on already-elevated food prices (FEWS NET, June 2023). This resulted in double-digit food price inflation throughout 2023, ranging from 26 to 34 percent (WFP, January 2024).

A protracted major food crisis Ethiopia has ranked among the ten largest food crises in terms of numbers of people facing high levels of acute food insecurity in all eight editions of the GRFC, reflecting the protracted and multidimensional nature of its food crisis.

Sources, as well as the coverage, have varied over the years, which challenges comparability between annual peak numbers and prevalence. However, the drivers have not, with weather extremes – namely drought – being the primary factor in undermining households’ access and availability to food each year except for in 2020 and 2021 when economic shocks and conflict/insecurity, respectively, dominated. In 2023, the dire situation was further compounded by a four-month pause in humanitarian food assistance through international pipelines due to concerns about aid diversion (WFP & FAO, November 2023).

DISPLACEMENT

4.5M forcibly displaced people by 2023

3.5M IDPs **1.0M** refugees and asylum-seekers

Source: IOM, September 2023.

Source: UNHCR Nowcasted estimate, December 2023.

ACUTE MALNUTRITION

4.1M children under 5 years old with acute malnutrition in 2023

3.0M MAM **1.1M SAM**

Source: HRP Ethiopia, 2023.

1.0M pregnant and breastfeeding women with acute malnutrition, 2023

Continual shocks and underlying structural fragilities contribute to high levels of acute malnutrition. Very High/Critical acute malnutrition prevalences were reported in rural areas and IDP sites in Tigray, with IDP populations more severely affected. Some 61 percent of pregnant and breastfeeding women in surveyed areas were acutely malnourished (MUAC < 23cm) (SMART, August 2023).

DRIVERS OF ACUTE MALNUTRITION 2023–2024

Inadequate practices Only 11 percent of children aged 6–23 months consume a Minimal Acceptable Diet, considered Critical. Fewer than 6 percent in Tigray received a Minimum Acceptable Diet, considered Extremely Critical (SMART, August 2023).

Lack of food In Tigray, 38 percent of the population experienced inadequate food consumption, particularly impacting the nutrition status of women and children (EFSA, February 2023). WFP food distributions were suspended nationwide between June and mid-December 2023.

Inadequate services WASH services are under strain because of persisting epidemics and displacement induced by conflict, drought and flooding, as well as the influx of refugees fleeing conflict in the Sudan since April (UNICEF, November 2023; IOM DTM Ethiopia, June 2023). In August 2022, the country’s longest recorded cholera epidemic began, with 11 regions affected and some 29 400 cases in 2023 (OCHA, January 2024). Malaria and measles outbreaks continue throughout the country.