

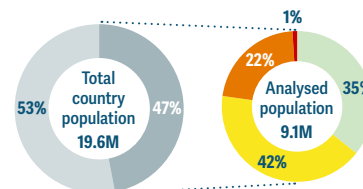
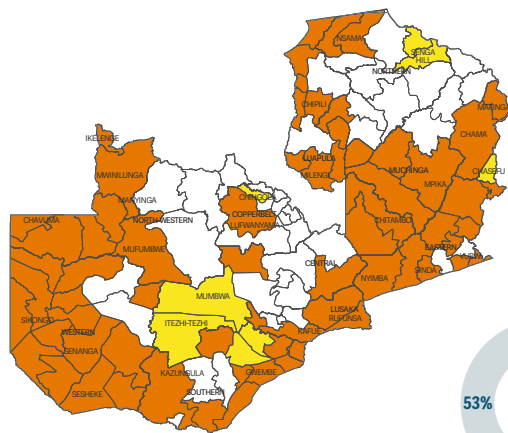
## ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY | The magnitude of acute food insecurity persists amid high levels of poverty, macroeconomic instability and weather shocks.

PEAK 2023/24 (OCTOBER 2023–MARCH 2024)

**2.0M** people or 23% of the analysed population faced high levels of acute food insecurity. Of them, 0.06M people faced Emergency (IPC Phase 4).

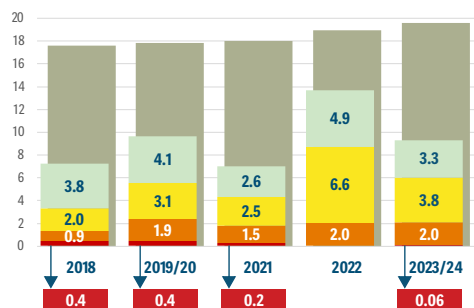
The analysis coverage decreased from 13.5 million people in 91 districts in 2022/23 to 9.1 million in 76 districts.

When considering the same districts analysed during the two periods, the number of people facing high levels of acute food insecurity increased significantly. This is largely driven by prolonged dry spells and flooding, pests, diseases, high food and input costs, and low labour opportunities and wages for poor households.



Source: Zambia IPC TWG, November 2023.

### Peak numbers of people (in millions) by phase of acute food insecurity, 2018–2024



Source: Zambia IPC TWG.

**A protracted food crisis** Zambia is a lower-middle-income country that has been defined as a major food crisis in six of the eight editions of the GRFC, even as the coverage of the analysis has varied widely (between the 2022/23 and 2023/24 lean seasons the analysis coverage decreased from 71 percent to 47 percent). The increasingly protracted nature of this food crisis is largely due to the impact of weather extremes on the food security and livelihoods of smallholder farming households that are responsible for up to 90 percent of food production, including frequent, prolonged dry spells, extreme high temperatures and floods. Zambia faces underlying structural problems, such as very high poverty rates and a high public debt burden that undermines efforts to deliver social services and alleviate poverty (WFP, 2023).

1 - None/Minimal 2 - Stressed 3 - Crisis 4 - Emergency 5 - Catastrophe/Famine Population analysed Population not analysed Total population Not analysed

DRIVERS OF THE CRISIS 2023–2024

**Economic shocks** Prices of maize reached record levels in October 2023 and were 80 percent higher year-on-year – due to currency weakness increasing fuel and transport costs and strong export demand for Zambian maize (FAO, November 2023).

The impact of the war in Ukraine also contributed to pushing up domestic prices, due to the disruptions it caused to the global food market (IPC, November 2023).

Labour opportunities and wages for poorer rural households were expected to be lower than average due to increases in the cost of agricultural inputs (IPC, November 2023).

**Weather extremes** Maize production increased by 22.9 percent year-on-year for the 2023/24 consumption period, largely thanks to increased planting and generally good weather conditions. However, localized flooding and prolonged dry spells in western and southern provinces, and the lower valleys of eastern provinces, caused reduced harvests.

of rains, which may extend the lean period beyond March 2024.

This could have a negative impact on labour opportunities since many areas rely on agriculture and livestock as their major source of food and income (IPC, November 2023).

In February 2024, the President of Zambia declared a national drought disaster and emergency. The dry spell from mid-January affected most of the central and southern half of the country, destroying almost half of the country's maize cultivation (UN, March 2024). Poor pasture and water conditions from early 2024 were already leading to an atypically high number of livestock deaths in southern Zambia, ahead of the July–September 2024 dry season (OCHA, February 2024).

**Crop diseases and pests** Almost all the provinces that grow cassava reported cassava brown streak disease, while army worms devastated field crops in affected districts (IPC, November 2023).

### DISPLACEMENT

**0.08M** refugees and asylum-seekers by 2023

Source: UNHCR Nowcasted estimate, December 2023.

The projected number of people facing high levels of acute food insecurity in 2024 considers the expected impacts of the prevailing El Niño event, including dry spells across the country and delayed onset