

Acute food insecurity overview 2021

Acute food insecurity trends

Acute food insecurity in the region increased from 11.8 million people in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) or equivalent in 2020 to nearly 12.8 million people in 2021 as rising staple food prices, atypically low labour demand driven by the lingering economic effects of COVID-19, weather extremes and insecurity continued to drive high levels of humanitarian food assistance needs.

In 2021, all five countries in the region reached a six-year high in their population in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above). There had already been a steep rise in the numbers of people in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) between 2019 and 2020 as hurricanes Eta and Iota which hit Honduras, Guatemala and Nicaragua in November 2020 greatly exacerbated the effects of years of consecutive weather extremes, and the heavy socioeconomic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic worsened ongoing economic crises.

In Haiti, the number of people facing Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) reached the highest recorded number by IPC for the country in March–June 2021, reflecting the overall worsening of acute food insecurity in the country since 2020, driven by economic crisis, high food prices, constrained incomes, violence, insecurity and below-average crop production. Since the first edition of the GRFC covering 2016, Haiti has experienced a continuous increase in the number of people in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) due to a combination of drought, floods, hurricanes, economic shocks and insecurity.

In Guatemala and Honduras, acute food insecurity has been worsening since 2019 due to the severe 2020 hurricane season, the socioeconomic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, rainfall deficits, drought and several years of localized crop losses. In 2021, both countries experienced the highest numbers of people in Crisis or worse (IPC phase 3 or above) recorded by the IPC in each country. In both countries, the damage wrought by hurricanes Eta and Iota led to income losses for farming households, and reduced food access. Subsistence households also lost staple grain supplies,

notably beans and maize, which reduced food reserves, with some experiencing a total loss of food reserves (IPC, February and June 2021).

Six-year trends, 2016–2022²

In the six editions of the GRFC, El Salvador has only qualified as a major food crisis at the national level on two other occasions.³ In 2019, 0.3 million people were in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above), representing 21 percent of the 1.4 million people analysed, largely due to the impact of drought and heavy rains on crop production. In 2021, the expanded analysis found that 0.99 million were in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above), representing 15 percent of the population, due to knock-on effects of the pandemic and insecurity

Economic shocks, including COVID-19, and the impact of hurricanes Eta and Iota have had a similarly negative impact on food security in Nicaragua, where approximately 400 000 people were in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) in September–October 2020 and in July–September 2021, according to FEWS NET.

The total number of people in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) or equivalent is not comparable with that of 2019, which included estimates for three countries not covered in 2020 and 2021 – Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Venezuelan migrants in Colombia and Ecuador.

Despite comparability challenges in terms of methodology used and population/geographical coverage of acute food insecurity estimates used over the years, the population facing Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) in the four countries covered in the GRFC between 2016 and 2021 (Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras and Nicaragua) increased continuously, rising from around 3.2 million to 11.8 million. The major increase reported in 2019 – when the numbers more than doubled from 3.6 million to 7.8 million – was due in part to increased coverage of IPC analyses in Guatemala, Honduras and Haiti. It was also attributed to weather extremes and economic shocks, as well as the political and socioeconomic crisis in Haiti.

² No trend graph is included for this region since comparable analyses were only available since late 2020 for El Salvador, since late 2019 for Haiti and Honduras, and since late 2018 for Guatemala.

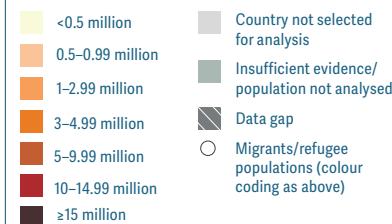
³ El Salvador was a major food crisis in 2018 and 2019 as part of the Dry Corridor sub-national areas.

MAP 27

Acute food insecurity estimates in Latin America and the Caribbean, in 2021



Numbers of people in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) (ranges)



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

Source: FSIN, GRFC 2022.