

Key nutrition challenges



501 500 children under 5 years were **wasted** in 2021
111 000 of them were **severely wasted**

Source: Madagascar IPC Technical Working Group, July 2021.

The number of wasted children under 5 years old in ten districts of Madagascar's Grand Sud increased more than fourfold from 135 500 in late 2020 to around 501 500 in May 2021. The number of children in need of urgent treatment for severe wasting more than quadrupled from 27 000 to 111 000 (IPC AMN, December 2020 and July 2021).

The nutritional situation is very worrying because the classification was made during the post-harvest period normally conducive to food security and a drop in cases of acute malnutrition (IPC AMN, July 2021). By November 2021, the number of wasted children was revised down but still remained extremely high at 309 000, of whom 60 000 needed treatment for severe wasting (IPC AMN, December 2021). The nutritional situation is expected to worsen during the January–April 2022 lean season before a seasonal improvement is expected from May–August 2022 (IPC AMN, December 2021).

All but two (Atsimo Atsinanana (20 percent) and Sofia (29 percent)) of Madagascar's 22 regions have a 'very high' prevalence of stunting (INSTAT and UNICEF, 2019).

Key drivers

Food security and access to healthy diets

Inadequate food consumption among children aged 6–23 months, stemming from high levels of acute food insecurity linked to southern Madagascar's worst drought in 40 years – was the main contributing factor to worsening malnutrition for all ten districts covered in the IPC AMN analysis. In seven districts, fewer than 2 percent of children received a minimum acceptable diet. In the remainder (Bekily, Ambovombe Androy and Taolagnaro), the percentage was just 3–9 percent (IPC AMN, December 2021).

Between April–June 2021 and November 2021 there was a significant improvement in the prevalence of wasting, with all districts classified in Alert (AMN Phase 2), while for acute food insecurity all districts were classified in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above). The improvement was mainly attributable to prevention actions, particularly the effects of humanitarian food assistance, which prioritised communes with Serious (IPC AMN Phase 3) and Critical (IPC AMN Phase 4) levels of acute malnutrition, as well as all those at risk of malnutrition, such as households with malnourished children and pregnant and lactating women (IPC AMN, December 2021).

Caring and feeding practices

In the districts of Amboasary, Beloha, Betsioky, Ambovombe and Ampanihy West, care and feeding practices were identified as major contributors to nutrition challenges. For instance, exclusive breastfeeding rates for infants up to six months of age were as low as 17.3 percent in Betsioky and 18.6 percent in Ambovombe (IPC AMN, December 2021).

Health services and household environment

Poor access to drinking water and sanitation was a major problem in the ten districts analysed. In Tsihombe, only 3 percent of households had access to safely managed water (SMART, November 2021). Shortages in water led to an increase in water borne diseases in some areas (OCHA, December 2021). There was very limited sanitation infrastructure in the districts analysed (IPC AMN, December 2021).

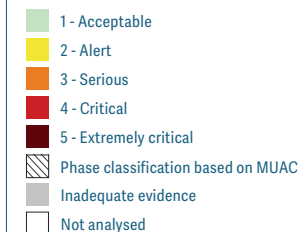
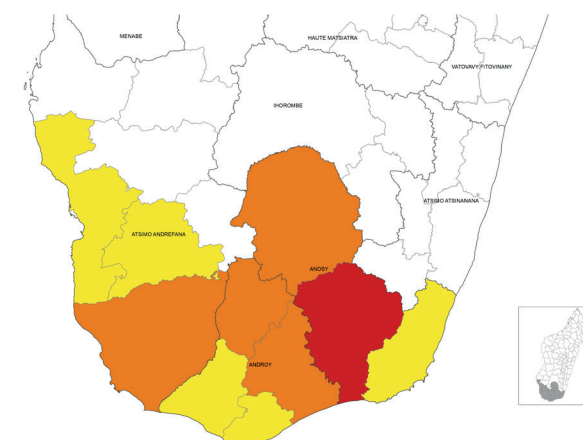
The high prevalence of diarrhoea, acute respiratory infections and malaria among children remained a significant public health concern (IPC, December 2021). People living in remote areas without roads or communication infrastructure struggled to reach health and nutrition services (ACAPS, October 2021).

Lack of access to health services (low anti-measles vaccination rates and vitamin A coverage) contributed to the deterioration of wasting in Betroka and Ampanihy West. In Amboasary Atsimo and Taolagnaro, where health services are fairly efficient, this was not a contributing factor (IPC, December 2021).

MAP 3.38

IPC acute malnutrition situation, January–April 2021

One district (Amboasary Atsimo) was classified in Critical (IPC AMN Phase 4), six (Ambovombe, Ampanihy, Beloha Betsioky, Bekily, Betroka and Tsihombe) in Serious (IPC AMN Phase 3) and five districts in Alert (IPC AMN Phase 2).



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

Source: Madagascar IPC AMN Technical Working Group, December 2020.