

2022 GLOBAL REPORT ON FOOD CRISES

JOINT ANALYSIS FOR BETTER DECISIONS

IN BRIEF

Understanding acute food insecurity – a look back across the six years of the Global Report on Food Crises

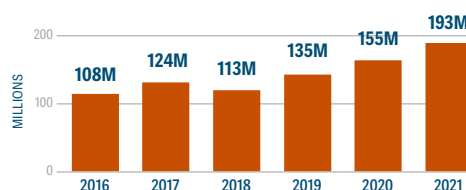
Globally, levels of hunger remain alarmingly high. In 2021, they surpassed all previous records as reported by the Global Report on Food Crises (GRFC), with close to 193 million people acutely food insecure and in need of urgent assistance across 53 countries/territories, according to the findings of the GRFC 2022. This represents an increase of nearly 40 million people compared to the previous high reached in 2020 (reported in the GRFC 2021).

This increase must be interpreted with care, given that it can be attributed to both a worsening acute food insecurity situation and a substantial (22 percent) expansion in the population analysed between 2020 and 2021. However, even when considering the share of the analysed population in Crisis or worse (IPC/CH Phase 3 or above) or equivalent, the proportion of the population in these phases has increased since 2020.

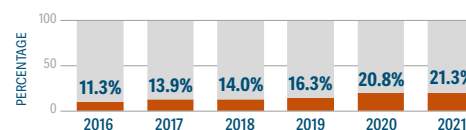
When considering the results of the six editions of the GRFC, the number of people has risen by 80 percent since 2016, when around 108 million people across 48 countries were acutely food insecure and in need of urgent assistance (Crisis or worse (IPC/CH Phase 3 or above) or equivalent).

When comparing the 39 countries/territories that were consistently in food crisis in all six editions of the GRFC, the number of people in Crisis or worse (IPC/CH Phase 3 or above) or equivalent almost doubled between 2016 and 2021 – up from 94 million to almost 180 million.

The population in Crisis or worse (IPC/CH Phase 3 or above) or equivalent nearly doubled between 2016 and 2021



The percentage of the analysed population in these phases also nearly doubled between 2016 and 2021



For several countries, FEWS NET produced estimates that were lower than those provided by the IPC/CH Technical Working Groups.

Source: FSIN & GNACF, 2017-2021; FSIN, using IPC, CH, FEWS NET, WFP, HNO and SEFSec data.

This increase across the six years of the GRFC – both in terms of absolute numbers and the percentage of the analysed population in these three highest acute food insecurity phases – reflects increased availability of acute food insecurity data, broader geographical coverage, revised population figures, and deteriorating food security contexts in a number of countries.

FIGURE 1

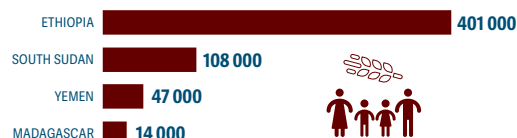
Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) and Cadre Harmonisé (CH)

Phase 1 Minimal	Phase 2 Stressed	Phase 3 Crisis	Phase 4 Emergency	Phase 5 Catastrophe/Famine
Households are able to meet essential food and non-food needs without engaging in atypical and unsustainable strategies to access food and income.	Households have minimally adequate food consumption but are unable to afford some essential non-food expenditures without engaging in stress-coping strategies.	Households have food consumption gaps with high or above usual acute malnutrition OR accelerated depletion of livelihoods assets OR resort to crisis coping strategies.	Households have large food consumption gaps resulting in very high acute malnutrition and excess mortality OR face extreme loss of livelihood assets OR resort to emergency coping strategies.	Households have an extreme lack of food and/or other basic needs. Starvation, death, destitution and extremely critical acute malnutrition levels are evident.

Action for disaster risk reduction and livelihoods protection

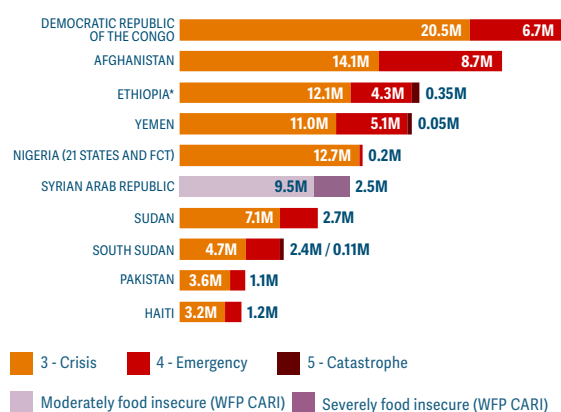
Urgent action required

570 000 people faced Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) in four countries in 2021 – the highest number in GRFC history



Source: FSIN, using IPC data.

Ten countries/territories with the highest number of people in Crisis or worse (IPC/CH Phase 3 or above) or equivalent in 2021



* These consolidated estimates combine two IPC analyses – the October 2020 analysis of Belg and Meher-dependent areas (covering January–June 2021) and the May 2021 update of conflict-affected areas of Tigray, Afar and Amhara (covering May–June 2021). The Government of Ethiopia has not endorsed the May 2021 analysis.

Source: FSIN, using IPC, CH and WFP data; GRFC 2022.

The outlook for global acute food insecurity in 2022 is expected to deteriorate further relative to 2021. In particular, the unfolding war in Ukraine is likely to exacerbate the already severe 2022 acute food insecurity forecasts included in this report, given that the repercussions of the war on global food, energy and fertilizer prices and supplies have not yet been factored into most country-level projection analyses.

The GRFC focuses on food crises where the local capacities to respond are insufficient, prompting a request for the urgent mobilization of the international community, as well as in countries/territories where there is ample evidence that the magnitude and severity of the food crisis exceed the local resources and capacities needed to respond effectively.

It provides estimates for populations in countries/territories where data are available, based on the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) and Cadre Harmonisé (CH) or comparable sources. Populations in Crisis or worse (IPC/CH Phase 3 or above) or equivalent are in need of urgent food and livelihood assistance.

A closer look at 2021

In 2021, almost 40 million people were facing Emergency or worse (IPC/CH Phase 4 or above) conditions, across 36 countries.¹

¹ Although IPC/CH analyses were available in 41 countries, 5 countries had no population facing Emergency or worse (IPC/CH Phase 4 or above).

Of critical concern were over half a million of people (570 000) facing Catastrophe (IPC/CH Phase 5) – starvation and death – in four countries: Ethiopia, South Sudan, southern Madagascar and Yemen. The number of people facing these dire conditions is four times that observed in 2020 and seven times higher than in 2016. During the first half of 2021, localized areas in South Sudan continued to face Famine Likely (IPC Phase 5).

An additional 236 million people were in Stressed (IPC/CH Phase 2) across 41 countries/territories in 2021 and required livelihood support and assistance for disaster risk reduction to prevent them from slipping into worse levels of acute food security.

In 2021, almost 70 percent of the total number of people in Crisis or worse (IPC/CH Phase 3 or above) or equivalent were found in ten food crisis countries/territories: the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Yemen, northern Nigeria, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Sudan, South Sudan, Pakistan, and Haiti. In seven of these, conflict/insecurity was the primary driver of acute food insecurity.

Drivers of acute food insecurity in 2021

While the food crises profiled in the GRFC continue to be driven by multiple, integrated drivers that are often mutually reinforcing, conflict/insecurity remains the main driver. In 2021, around 139 million people were facing Crisis or worse (IPC/CH Phase 3 or above) or equivalent across 24 countries/territories where conflict/insecurity was considered the primary driver.

This is a marked increase from 2020, when 99 million people in 23 conflict-affected countries/territories were in Crisis or worse (IPC/CH Phase 3 or above) or equivalent. It was the key driver in three of the four countries with populations in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) – Ethiopia, South Sudan and Yemen.

Economic shocks formed the main driver in 21 countries in 2021, where 30.2 million people were in Crisis or worse (IPC/CH Phase 3 or above) or equivalent. Global food prices rose to new heights in 2021 as a result of a combination of factors, notably an uneven global economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and widespread supply chain disruptions.

Domestic food price inflation in many low-income countries rose significantly, particularly those with weak currencies and a high reliance on food imports, in those where border closures, conflict or insecurity disrupted trade flows and where weather extremes severely curtailed food production/availability. These macroeconomic factors had a major impact on the purchasing power of the poorest households, many of which were still experiencing job and income losses due to pandemic-related restrictions.

Weather extremes were the main drivers of acute food insecurity in eight African countries, with 23.5 million people in Crisis or worse (IPC/CH Phase 3 or above) or equivalent, including in southern Madagascar, where nearly 14 000 people were in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) in April–September 2021 due to the effects of drought.

The impact of weather-related disasters on acute food insecurity has intensified since 2020, when it was considered the primary driver for 15.7 million people across 15 countries. Weather shocks

– in the form of drought, rainfall deficits, flooding and cyclones
– have been particularly detrimental in key crises in East, Central and Southern Africa, and Eurasia.

Malnutrition in food-crisis countries

Malnutrition remained at critical levels in countries affected by food crises, driven by a complex interplay of factors, including low quality food due to acute food insecurity and poor child-feeding practices, a high prevalence of childhood illnesses, and poor access to sanitation, drinking water and health care.

While data is limited, according to analyses carried out in 2021, almost 26 million children under 5 years old were suffering from wasting and in need of urgent treatment in 23 of the 35 major food crises. Within this, over 5 million children were at an increased risk of death due to severe wasting. In the ten food-crisis countries with the highest number of people in Crisis or worse (IPC/CH Phase 3 or above) or equivalent, 17.5 million children were wasted.

Displacement in 2021

People uprooted from their homes are among the most vulnerable to acute food insecurity and malnutrition. In 2021, out of 51 million internally displaced people (IDP) globally, nearly 45 million were in 24 food-crisis countries/territories. The six countries/territories with the highest numbers of IDPs – the Syrian Arab Republic, Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Yemen, Ethiopia and the Sudan – were among the ten largest food crises in 2021 by numbers of people in Crisis or worse (IPC/CH Phase 3 or above) or equivalent.

Out of around 21 million refugees and 4 million asylum seekers globally in 2021, over 60 percent (around 15.3 million people) were hosted in 52 food-crisis countries/territories, where a mix of conflict/insecurity, COVID-19, poverty, food insecurity and weather extremes compounded their humanitarian plight (UNHCR, November 2021).

A grim outlook for 2022

The situation is expected to worsen in 2022. In 41 out of the 53 countries/territories included in this report, as well as Cabo Verde, between 179 million and 181 million people are already forecast to be in Crisis or worse (IPC/CH Phase 3 or above) or equivalent in 2022.² No forecast was available at the time of publication for 12 of the 53 countries/territories with an estimate reported in 2021.

For most of the world's major food crises, acute food insecurity is expected to persist at similar levels to 2021 or increase. Major deteriorations are anticipated in northern Nigeria, Yemen, Burkina Faso and the Niger due to conflict, as well as in Kenya, South Sudan and Somalia, largely due to the impact of consecutive seasons of below-average rains. Though significant uncertainty exists, an estimated 2.5–4.99 million people in Ukraine will likely need humanitarian assistance in the near term (FEWS NET, April 2022).

During 2022, around 329 000 people will likely face Catastrophe

² FEWS NET provided a range estimate for four countries (Ethiopia, Nicaragua, Uganda, and Zimbabwe) in 2022. Although data for Cabo Verde was not available in 2021, forecast data became available in 2022.

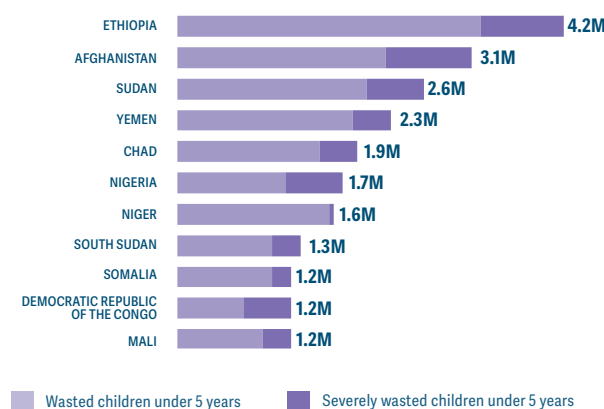
Numbers of people in Crisis or worse (IPC/CH Phase 3 or above) or equivalent by key driver in 2021



Note: Many food crises are the result of multiple drivers. The GRFC has based this infographic on the predominant driver in each country/territory.

Source: FSIN, GRFC 2022.

Countries/territories with more than 1 million wasted children under 5 years in 2021

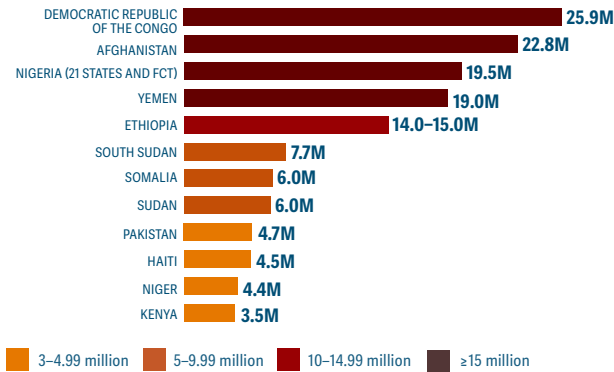


The data for child wasting in 2021 is derived from IPC AMN for Yemen (February 2021); Chad (April 2021); Nigeria (December 2021); Somalia (December 2021) and Mali (March 2022); from HNOs for Afghanistan (January 2022), the Sudan (December 2021), Democratic Republic of the Congo (February 2022) and South Sudan (February 2022); and from the Global Nutrition Cluster for Ethiopia (September 2021) and the Niger (mid-2021).

Source: Global Nutrition Cluster; HNO 2022; IPC AMN 2020–2022.

(IPC Phase 5) in three countries. It is expected that for the fifth consecutive year, Yemen will have populations in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5), with 161 000 people projected to be in this phase in the second half of 2022 under the most likely scenario. In a less likely, worst-case scenario, there is a Risk of Famine in at least two districts. Another 87 000 people are projected to face Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) in South Sudan due to the cumulative effects of conflict/insecurity, weather extremes and macro-economic challenges. In Somalia, prolonged drought could push 81 000 people into Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5). Although not the most likely scenario, a Risk of Famine could emerge in Somalia by mid-2022, if the April–June Gu season rains fail, if conflict intensifies, if drought increases displacement and if food prices continue to rise. An additional factor influencing a Risk of Famine is if humanitarian assistance is not scaled up and does not reach the country's most vulnerable populations.

Countries/territories with over 3 million people forecast to be in Crisis or worse (IPC/CH Phase 3 or above) or equivalent, in 2022



Source: IPC/CH for all countries/territories except Ethiopia (FEWS NET).

Our collective challenge

The alarmingly high incidence of acute food insecurity and malnutrition starkly exposes the fragility of global and local food systems that are under mounting strain from the increased frequency and severity of weather extremes, the COVID-19 pandemic, increasing conflict and insecurity and rising global food prices. The interconnectedness of drivers is further laid bare by the unfolding war in Ukraine, which not only compromises the food security of those directly affected by the war, but compounds existing challenges faced by millions of acutely food-insecure people worldwide.

Some countries facing food crises are particularly vulnerable to the risks to food markets created by the war in the Black Sea area, notably due to their high dependency on imports of food, fuel and agricultural inputs and/or vulnerability to global food price shocks.

While the international community has stepped up to calls for urgent famine mitigation action, global humanitarian and development funding for food crises is failing to match growing needs. While funding for humanitarian food assistance has been falling since 2017, the current shortfall is particularly stark due the COVID-19-induced economic slowdown and prioritization of the public health response to the pandemic.

The way forward

The international community must anticipate and act to mitigate the severe consequences of those already experiencing the highest levels of acute food insecurity, as well as of those in food stress. The situation calls more than ever for at-scale action to protect lives and livelihoods and support sustainable food systems and production where it is needed most.

In contexts where food availability is limited by reduced imports and food access curtailed by higher prices and reduced humanitarian food assistance, providing support to farmers to raise their productivity and improve their access to markets, and to rural communities to diversify their livelihoods and enhance their resilience to shocks is crucial.

The international community must mobilize the investments and political will needed to collectively address the causes and consequences of escalating food crises across humanitarian, development and peace perspectives. The urgency to do this will likely continue to grow in the coming months and years, driven by the direct and indirect effects of the war in Ukraine.

The GRFC is a powerful guide for decision-makers in the international community. Though this report demonstrates that overall quality of data has improved, further work is needed to improve coverage, quality and timeliness of data collection and analysis. High quality and timely food security and nutrition data and information are vital in ensuring a situation analysis that identifies not only outcomes, but hunger's main drivers, for a targeted and integrated response.

While all partners are in broad agreement with the data and information presented in this report, FEWS Net's analyses suggest that the population requiring emergency food assistance in 2021 was lower than the IPC estimates for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Haiti, Nigeria, the Sudan and Yemen and higher than IPC estimates for Zimbabwe.

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