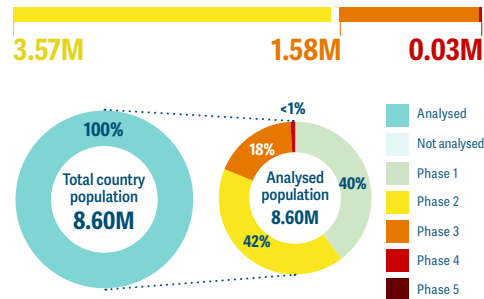


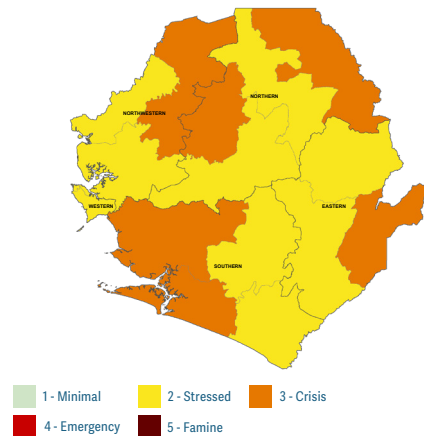
Sierra Leone

ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY PEAK 2022

1.61M people or **19%** of the analysed population in CH Phase 3 or above, June–August 2022



CH acute food insecurity situation, June–August 2022



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

Source: Cadre Harmonisé, March 2022.

Food crisis overview

The number of people in Crisis or worse (CH Phase 3 or above) during the June–August 2022 lean season was 1.61 million, largely due to persistently high food and fuel prices, coupled with diminished purchasing power. This was 9 percent lower than the 2021 lean season figure of 1.76 million.

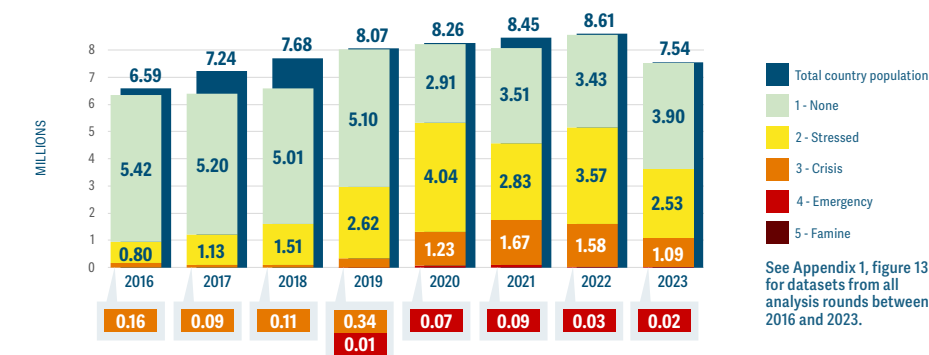
The share of the total population facing high levels of acute food insecurity dropped from 22 percent to 19 percent in the same period. This reflected favourable cereal production in 2022, at about 9 percent above the five-year average, which mitigated the effects of economic drivers.

However, cereal production was still 8 percent lower than in 2021 due to below-average rainfall and floods that damaged crops (PREGEC, November 2022).

Improvement projected for 2023

The number of people in CH Phase 3 or above is projected to decrease to 1.1 million by the June–September 2023 lean season (CH, November 2022).

Numbers of people by phase of acute food insecurity, 2016–2023



Source: Cadre Harmonisé.

Acute food insecurity since 2016

Sierra Leone has qualified as a food crisis in all seven editions of the GRFC, and for the last three years has also qualified as a major food crisis with more than 1 million people in CH Phase 3 or above. The food crisis escalated in June–August 2020 due to price spikes and job losses associated with COVID-19.

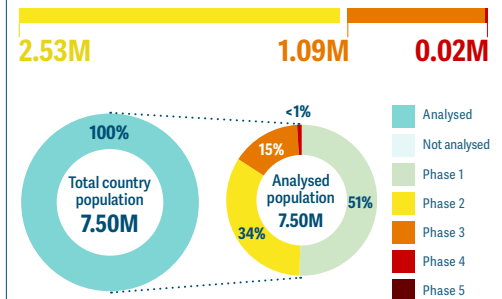
The share of the population facing Phase 2 increased from 12 percent in 2016 to 49 percent by 2020 (GRFC 2022). Stressed conditions (CH Phase 2) are still expected to affect one in three Sierra Leoneans by June–August 2023.

Drivers of the crisis, 2022–23

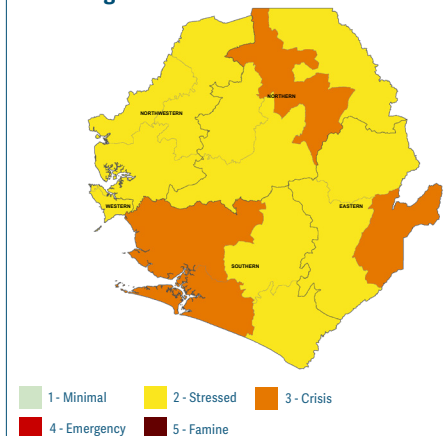
Economic shocks In 2022, the weak economy was dealt a further blow by the rise in global food and fuel prices caused by the war in Ukraine (FAO-GIEWS, November 2022). The continued depreciation of the national currency – by September 2022, its value had depreciated by 40.7 percent compared with September 2021 (WFP, November 2022) – made food

ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY PROJECTION 2023

1.11M people or **15%** of the analysed population in CH Phase 3 or above, June–August 2023



Projected CH acute food insecurity situation, June–August 2023



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Source: Cadre Harmonisé, November 2022.

imports more costly despite increasing need. Rice imports were anticipated to be 20 percent higher than the previous year and about 25 percent above the five-year average, following a drop in production in 2019 and 2020 (FAO-GIEWS, November 2022).

Despite the government's allocation of USD 100 million to support rice, wheat flour, sugar and fuel imports, prices of local and imported rice varieties were up by 50 percent and 40 percent respectively year-on-year in November 2022. Prices of cassava, an important substitute for rice for poor households, were 40 percent higher year-on-year in November 2022. Food inflation increased from 19.4 percent in December 2021 to 46.7 percent in December 2022 (Statistics Sierra Leone, January 2023). The average price of fuel continued to increase in the third quarter of 2022 and was about 20 percent higher compared with the previous quarter (FAO-GIEWS, November 2022).

At the same time, high public debt levels, monetary tightening and reduced domestic consumption slowed down economic growth in 2022, reducing income-generating opportunities for the most vulnerable households (FAO-GIEWS, November 2022).

Weather extremes Rainfall deficits led to localized crop losses in July and August. Floods in August in the northwest, west and southern areas destroyed an estimated 6 000 ha of rice farms and other crops. As of November 2022, about 17 000 people were affected by floods (FAO-GIEWS, November 2022), including 3 989 farmers in Kambia, Moyamba and Bonthe districts (PREGEC, November 2022).

Insecurity In July 2022, Freetown experienced a series of strike actions with civil unrest precipitating a humanitarian crisis affecting populations across many parts of the country. On 10 August, demonstrators in Freetown, Waterloo, Makeni and Kamakwie demanded reductions in fuel prices, economic relief for indebted families, fair prices for agricultural products, employment and labour rights, security and protection, blocking roads and main supply routes (ICRC, December 2022).

NUTRITION

Number of children under 5 years old with wasting, 2022



3 200 pregnant and lactating women acutely malnourished, 2022

Source: SLNNS, 2021.

The number of wasted children under 5 years is projected to increase marginally from 176 269 in 2022 to 180 338 in 2023. According to the most recent national nutrition survey (SLNNS, 2021), child wasting levels were classified as 'medium' by WHO thresholds at 5.2 percent, compared with 9 percent in 2010. Regional disparities exist with the prevalence of wasting highest in the Western Area Urban district at 9.6 percent and Western Area Slums (7.6 percent). The prevalence also exceeded 5 percent in Bonthe Kambia, Kenema, Port Loko, Pujehun and Western Area Rural.

The prevalence of Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) was significantly higher among 6–23-month-old children (7.1 percent) than among 30–59-month-olds (3.5 percent).

Around 5.5 percent of pregnant/lactating women (PLW) were acutely malnourished (MUAC <23cm) – considered a medium prevalence – with 0.9 percent of them severely acutely malnourished (MUAC <21cm) (SLNNS, 2021).

Stunting levels were 'high' at 26.2 percent of children nationally, with four out of 17 districts – Kailahun, Kenema, Koinadugu and Tonkolili – reporting levels above the 30 percent 'very high' WHO threshold. A higher percentage of boys (29.2 percent) than girls (23.4 percent) were stunted (SLNNS, 2021).

Drivers of undernutrition

Inadequate maternal and child-feeding practices High consumption of monotonous starchy staple diets and poor consumption of iron-rich animal-sourced foods, such as milk, meat and eggs, lead to nutrient intake deficits. Very few children (4.9 percent) aged 6–23 months eat the Minimum Acceptable Diet, which meets both the recommended dietary diversity and frequency thresholds. This is considered an 'extremely critical' level of MAD. The situation is worst in the southern district of Bonthe (zero percent). Around 25 percent have acceptable dietary diversity (SLNNS, 2021).

Micronutrient deficiencies account for anaemia in approximately 73 percent of children aged 6–59 months old and 43 percent of women of reproductive age (15–49 years), indicating a severe public health problem for both (WHO, 2019). Just over half (52.7 percent) of infants up to 6 months are exclusively breastfed – considered 'alert' – though the country is on course to meet the exclusive breastfeeding target (SLNNS, 2021; Global Nutrition Report, 2020).

High prevalence of infectious diseases Nearly one in every eight (12.3 percent) assessed children experienced one or more communicable childhood diseases (e.g. fever, cough, diarrhoea, among others) in the two weeks prior to the assessment, which is a possible contributory factor to the poor undernutrition situation (SMART, 2021).

Poor household environment Morbidity levels are aggravated by the poor WASH conditions in many parts of the country, characterized by poor access to safe drinking water, lack of sanitation facilities and poor handwashing practices at critical times. Only 11 percent of households have access to basic water services (UNICEF Global Report, 2020) and just 14.5 percent have safely managed sanitation services (JME, 2020).