

# Latin America and the Caribbean

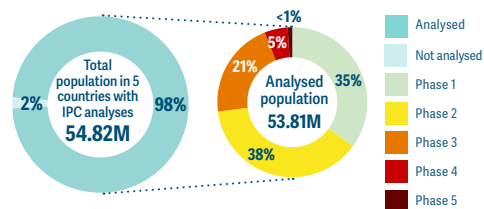
Colombia (refugees and migrants) | Dominican Republic | Ecuador (refugees and migrants) | El Salvador | Guatemala | Haiti | Honduras | Nicaragua

## Acute food insecurity severely deteriorated in Haiti, while data became newly available for two additional food crises

**17.8M** people or **27%** of the analysed population facing high levels of acute food insecurity in 2022 in eight countries

14.43M of them are in five countries with IPC analyses

20.33M in 5 countries | 11.49M in 5 countries | 2.92M in 5 countries | 19 000 in 1 country



Source: IPC TWGs, 2022.

**0.3M** refugees and migrants in Ecuador, and **2.9M** in Colombia, faced moderate or severe acute food insecurity (WFP CARI, 2022).

In Nicaragua, **0.2M** people faced high levels of acute food insecurity (FEWS NET, 2023).

### 11 countries in this region were selected for inclusion

Four countries had data gaps/data not meeting GRFC requirements: Cuba, Ecuador (residents), Peru (residents, refugees and migrants) and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). Five of the remaining countries are major food crises: Colombia (refugees and migrants), Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Haiti and Honduras. At the time of publication, the Government of El Salvador had not approved the IPC data and report prepared in August 2022.

### Populations in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5)

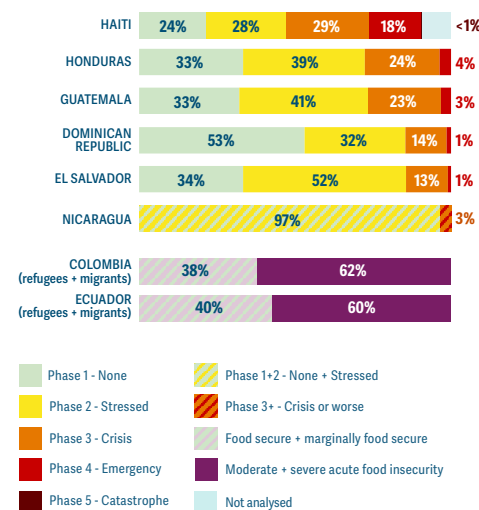
The severity of the food crisis in Haiti worsened in 2022, with about 19 000 people estimated to face Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) between September 2022 and February 2023 in the Cité Soleil commune of the capital Port-au-Prince where acute food insecurity conditions have been deteriorating for three consecutive years. Gang violence and high levels of poverty severely constrained food access and availability due to lower market supplies, abnormally high prices, and physical constraints to access markets and engage in income-generating activities.

The number of people facing Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) or equivalent reached 17.8 million or 27 percent of the analysed population in eight countries of the Latin America and the Caribbean region in 2022.

Haiti had the highest severity of acute food insecurity, with 48 percent of its analysed population in IPC Phase 3 or above – up from 46 percent in 2021. The number of people in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) in Haiti increased from an estimated 1.16 million during the 2021 peak in March–June (IPC, September 2020) to 1.81 million in September–February 2023, representing 18 percent of the analysed population (IPC, October 2022).

In Honduras and Guatemala, 26–28 percent of the resident population were in IPC Phase 3 or above. Regarding Venezuelan migrant and refugee populations, 60 percent in Ecuador and 62 percent in Colombia faced moderate or severe acute food insecurity as per WFP CARI methodology (WFP, 2023).

### Share of analysed population by phase of acute food insecurity, 2022

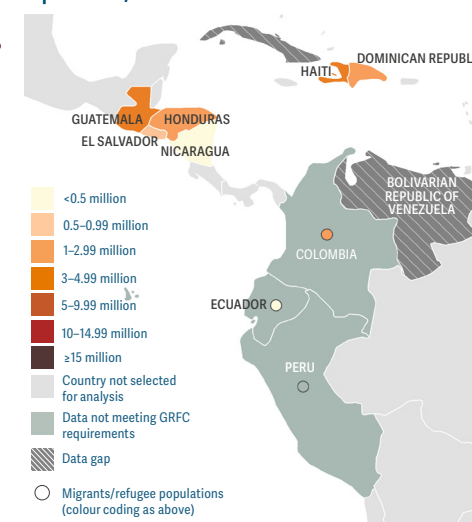


Source: IPC TWGs, 2022; FEWS NET (Nicaragua); WFP CARI (Colombia and Ecuador).

Haiti had the highest number of people facing high levels of acute food insecurity, at 4.72 million, 26 percent of the region's total number. Next were Guatemala (4.6 million), Honduras (2.64 million) and Dominican Republic (1.55 million).

Of concern, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the epicentre of the migrant crisis in the region, did not have any publicly available and nationally endorsed food insecurity data available in 2022.

### Numbers of people in IPC Phase 3 or above or equivalent, 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: IPC TWGs, 2022; FEWS NET (Nicaragua); WFP CARI (Colombia and Ecuador).

Three major food crises in the region – Colombia (refugees and migrants), Guatemala and Dominican Republic – are upper-middle-income countries, suggesting that they have greater capacity to cope compared with low- and middle-income major food-crisis countries or those facing an influx of refugees/migrants. However, in 2022 they faced high levels of acute food insecurity resulting from the increasing pressure from successive global economic shocks and the burden of protracted regional displacement combined with

national-level shocks such as weather extremes.

In the five countries also included in the GRFC 2022 – El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras and Nicaragua – the number of people facing high levels of acute food insecurity increased slightly from 12.76 million in 2021 to 13.08 million in 2022. At the country level, there was a year-on-year significant increase in the number of people facing high levels of acute food insecurity in Guatemala and in Haiti, while there were declines in Nicaragua, Honduras and El Salvador.

While not classified as major food crises, El Salvador had about 900 000 people or 14 percent of the analysed population projected to face IPC Phase 3 or above and Nicaragua had 200 000 people or 3 percent of the analysed population in these phases. In Ecuador, about 300 000 refugees and migrants faced moderate or severe acute food insecurity.

### Drivers of the crisis, 2022–23

**Economic shocks** were the primary driver of acute food insecurity in all GRFC countries except for Haiti. In Colombia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, reduced income opportunities eroded households’ purchasing power amid increasing macroeconomic challenges, exacerbated by the ripple effects of the war in Ukraine. Low-income households that rely on the informal sector continued to be

negatively impacted by the persisting economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and severe weather hazards, mostly in Guatemala and Honduras.

As of December 2022, annual food inflation was particularly high in Haiti, estimated at 47.7 percent, and in Colombia at 27.8 percent, while in the other four countries it ranged between 10 and 16 percent, limiting economic access to food. A high reliance on imports of food, fertilizers and fuel combined with currency depreciation, mainly in Haiti and Colombia, added further upward pressure on food prices.

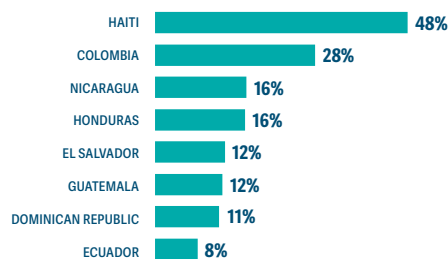
**Conflict/insecurity** was the main driver of acute food insecurity in Haiti. Increasing political instability, economic hardship and social tensions have led to heightened unrest and conflict. In 2022, gang violence reached extremely high levels especially in urban areas, disrupting markets and the movement of people and goods, thus severely hindering economic activity. This resulted in poor market supplies and shortages of essential commodities, including fuel, which contributed to sharp increases in food prices.

**Weather extremes** were not identified as the main driver of acute food insecurity in any country of the region but nonetheless did contribute in 2022.

In Haiti, below-average precipitation in some key cereal-producing departments, combined with high costs of agricultural inputs and shortages of fuel, led to a reduction in production of the main season crops and resulted in reduced availability of seeds for the 2022 minor fall and winter seasons.

In Honduras, the slow recovery of the agricultural sector from the impact of hurricanes Eta and Iota in 2020 and unfavourable weather conditions in some areas during the 2021 cropping season continued to affect rural livelihoods and limit food availability in 2022. During September 2022, floods and landslides caused by the rainy season affected more than 84 000 people (ECHO, October 2022). Dominican Republic was hit hard by Hurricane Fiona in September 2022. In Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, heavy rains, strong winds and the passage of hurricane Julia in October 2022 resulted in flooding, landslides and localized damage in areas producing staple grain crops.

### Annual food price inflation rates, December 2022



Source: WFP Economic Explorer, accessed 14 March 2023.

### Acute food insecurity since 2016

In the five countries consistently included in the GRFC between 2017 and 2022 – El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras and Nicaragua – the estimated number of people facing high levels of acute food insecurity registered nearly a fourfold increase, in part due to almost a doubling in the analysis coverage. See figure, right.

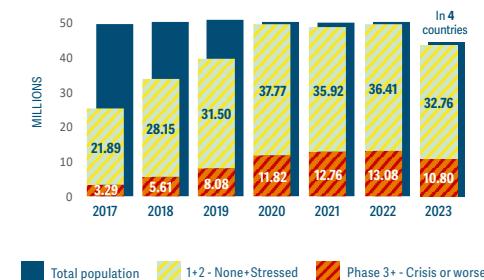
Between 2017 and 2019, the number of people in IPC Phase 3 or above increased by around 150 percent from 3.20 million to 8.08 million, with the analysed population increasing by nearly 60 percent. Between 2020 and 2022, when analyses covered at least 87 percent of the total population in these five countries, the number of people in IPC Phase 3 or above increased from 11.82 million to 13.08 million, mainly led by the increases in Guatemala and Haiti.

Between 2019 and 2021, Latin America experienced the largest increase in the prevalence of moderate and severe acute food insecurity compared with other regions of the world (ECLAC, FAO, WFP, December 2022).

A significant cause of the regional increase in the number of people in IPC Phase 3 or above, particularly since 2018, is the escalation of the humanitarian crisis in Haiti and inclusion of estimates for refugees and migrants from Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

Since 2016, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras and Nicaragua were consistently included as food crises and El Salvador was included in all editions but 2017. Estimates for national populations have been included only once for the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in 2019 and Dominican Republic in 2022.


### Numbers of people by phase of acute food insecurity in five countries with data, 2017–2023




Countries with data each year since 2017: El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras and Nicaragua.

Source: IPC TWG, FEWS NET and WFP.

**DISPLACEMENT**

 IDPs In Haiti, widespread and increasing gang violence, together with a disastrous earthquake in August 2021, has triggered internal displacements. As of late 2022, there were about 155 000 IDPs, including 87 000 people newly displaced in the Metropolitan Area of Port-au-Prince, which faces high levels of acute food insecurity.

**NUTRITION IN THE LAC REGION**

 The lack of updated nutrition data continues to impede a comprehensive assessment of the situation in Latin America amid growing concerns about increasing cases of wasted children – mostly among refugees and migrants – albeit not at the levels seen in other food-crisis contexts. Migrant populations face elevated levels of acute food insecurity, challenges caring for young children, and limited access to health services, which are all contributing factors to child wasting.

In Haiti, the prevalence of wasting in 2021 was of ‘medium’ severity, according to WHO thresholds, but by 2022 it was ‘very high’ in urban areas that were severely affected by gang violence, where approximately 20 percent of children under 5 years were suffering from wasting. Of them 5 percent were severely wasted (UNICEF, August 2022). Increasing levels of acute food insecurity in 2022 and the cholera outbreak were expected to have further exacerbated the already fragile nutrition situation in many parts of the country (UNICEF, December 2022).

**Focus on the regional migrant crisis**



Venezuelans continued to leave the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, with cross-border displacement aggravated by onward movements from host countries, often through perilous journeys (UNHCR, March 2023).

Since 2015, nearly 7.2 million migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers have left the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (R4V, January 2023) driven by a challenging political, socioeconomic and human rights situation. By the end of 2022, an estimated 6.03 million refugees and migrants were hosted in Latin America and the Caribbean (Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (RMRP) 2023–2024, November 2022).

In host countries across the region, the increasing cost of living, post COVID-19 impacts, the economic impacts of the war in Ukraine, lack of documentation, the irregular status of refugees and migrants, and high unemployment severely curtailed livelihoods and increased food insecurity in 2022. According to the regional response plan covering 17 countries, over 73 percent of migrants and refugees are in need of external assistance (RMRP 2023–2024, November 2022).

In Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, which together host about 75 percent of the refugees and migrants from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in the region, severe economic shocks have affected the capacity of

the governments to provide food assistance to both acutely food-insecure nationals and migrants, prompting countries to request external assistance in 2022. This is why these three countries were considered for inclusion for the first time in the GRFC.

In Colombia, there were about 2.5 million refugees and migrants with intention to settle and an additional 2.3 million pendular and in-transit migrants, as of December 2022 (R4V, January 2023), as well as nearly 1 million Colombian returnees from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. Many are exposed to violence and are at high risk of forced recruitment and human trafficking (RMNA, October 2022). In Ecuador, about half a million Venezuelans (R4V, January 2023) have an irregular status, which affects their access to services and formal employment while in transit (RMRP 2023–2024, November 2022).

In Peru, about 80 percent of the 1.5 million refugees and migrants (R4V, January 2023) relied primarily on the informal sector for income generation. The salaries of migrants were estimated to be 20 percent lower than

**Numbers of Venezuelan migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers with intention to settle**



Source: Regional Inter-agency Coordination Platform, January 2023.

those offered to Peruvians. Those engaged in creating their own economic activities struggled to access credit and expand their businesses (RMNA, October 2022).

The worsening food insecurity situation coupled with limited access to WASH and healthcare poses a nutrition challenge to refugees and migrants, on top of the increasing cost of living and high poverty levels. Even though wasting levels among the refugee and migrant children under 5 is below 5 percent across Latin America and the Caribbean, it reached 13.4 percent in Brazil. In Colombia, about 22.8 percent of pendular migrant children under 5 were stunted and 37.3 percent were anaemic. In addition, nearly a quarter of pregnant refugees and migrants in Colombia were undernourished and/or anaemic (RMNA, October 2022).

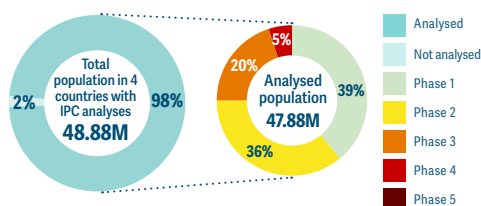
**At the regional level the number of people facing high levels of acute food insecurity was projected to decline**

Up to **12.3M** people or **23%** of the analysed population were projected to be in IPC Phase 3 or above in 2023 in five countries\*

12.1M of them are in four countries with IPC analyses



In Haiti, no populations were in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) during March–June 2023, but 19 206 people were in this phase in September 2022–February 2023.



Source: IPC TWGs, 2022 and 2023.

In Nicaragua, 0.1–0.25M people were projected to face high levels of acute food insecurity (FEWS NET, January 2023).

\* No projections available for El Salvador or refugees and migrants in Colombia and Ecuador.

The number of people in IPC Phase 3 or above in Latin America and the Caribbean was projected to decline overall, with a marginal increase in Haiti and a decrease in Guatemala and Honduras in 2023.

Up to 12.35 million people or around 22.8 percent of the analysed populations in five countries are projected to face high levels of acute food insecurity in 2023 – over 1.37 million people fewer than the same five countries in 2022. Around 2.43 million people are projected to be in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) in four of them.

At country level there was no major change in coverage of the analysed populations between 2022 and 2023.

In Haiti, the percentage of the analysed population in IPC Phase 3 or above was projected to increase from 48 percent in 2022 to 49 percent in March–June 2023 or 4.9 million people, including 1.8 million in Emergency (IPC Phase 4), reflecting persisting insecurity and gang violence, coupled with high food prices and poor economic activity (IPC, March 2023). Despite the increase in the magnitude of the food crisis, populations in Port-au-Prince are no longer projected to be in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) (IPC, March 2023).

In Dominican Republic, the acute food insecurity projection period straddled 2022 and 2023 and thus was the same for both years (IPC, January 2023).

In Guatemala, the total population was analysed in both 2022 and 2023, but a projection analysis extending to the typical lean season was not available. The magnitude and severity of acute food insecurity was projected to decline from 4.6 million people or 26 percent of the population during the lean season between June and September 2022 to 3.24 million people or 19 percent of the total population between October 2022 and February 2023 (IPC, June 2022).

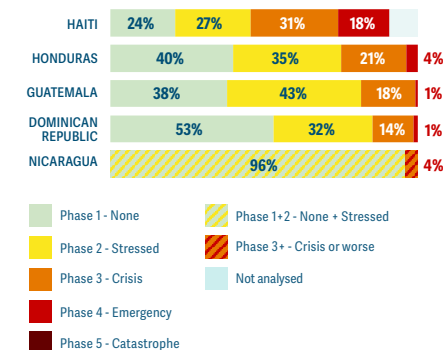
The improvement reflects better household access

to food due to increased income opportunities for agricultural labourers, who rely on daily wages, during the harvest of cash crops, such as sugarcane, cardamom and coffee (IPC, June 2022). However, the improvement was expected to be short-lived, as households face persistently high debts, low levels of food stocks and extended market reliance during a time of above-average prices (FEWS NET, October 2022).

In Honduras, the analysis covered the entire country in both 2022 and 2023 and the number of people in IPC Phase 3 or above was projected to decline to 2.42 million or 25 percent of the population between June and August 2023, compared with 2.64 million people or 28 percent of the population between June and August 2022. Reduced household purchasing power amid increasing prices of food and lower income-generating opportunities are factors expected to underpin the high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC, January 2023).

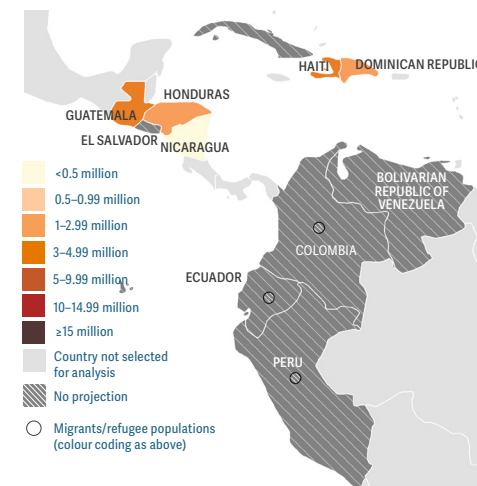
In Nicaragua, the number of people facing high levels of acute food insecurity between June and August 2023 was projected to be between 100 000 and 250 000, reflecting persistent economic difficulties and the lingering effects of weather shocks (FEWS NET, January 2023).

**Share of analysed population by phase of acute food insecurity, 2023**



Source: IPC TWGs, 2022–2023; FEWS NET (Nicaragua).

**Numbers of people in IPC Phase 3 or above or equivalent, 2023**



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Source: IPC TWGs, 2022 and 2023; FEWS NET, 2023 (Nicaragua).