

West Africa and the Sahel, and Cameroon

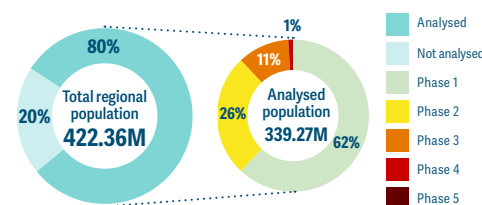
Burkina Faso | Cabo Verde | Cameroon | Chad | Gambia | Ghana | Guinea | Liberia | Mali | Mauritania | Niger | Nigeria (21 states and FCT) | Senegal | Sierra Leone | Togo

Conflicts and economic shocks drove up acute food insecurity to record highs in 2022 despite above-average agricultural campaign for the region

41.45M people or **12%** of the analysed population in CH Phase 3 or above, in 2022 in 15 countries



In Burkina Faso and Nigeria, no populations were in **Catastrophe (CH Phase 5)** during the June–August 2022 peak period, but **1 800 people** in Burkina Faso and **3 000 people** in Nigeria were in this phase in October–December 2022.



All countries had 94–100 percent of their populations analysed except Ghana (44%), Nigeria (21 states and the FCT) (72%), Togo (73%) and Guinea (84%).

Source: Cadre Harmonisé, March and November 2022.

15 countries in this region were selected for inclusion, all with data available

Nine of these countries included in the GRFC 2023 are major food crises: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. Benin, Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea-Bissau were included in 2021 but not in 2022, while Cabo Verde, Ghana and Togo were included in 2022 but not in 2021.

The number of people facing high levels of acute food insecurity reached a new record for CH reporting in 2022, at about 41.45 million in 15 countries. This is nearly 40 percent more people than in 2021, even though 3 million fewer people were analysed. At 2.95 million, the number of people in Emergency (CH Phase 4) was nearly double that of 2021.

The highest number of people in CH Phase 3 or above were in Nigeria (21 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT)), with about 19.45 million, followed by the Niger, Cameroon, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Mauritania.

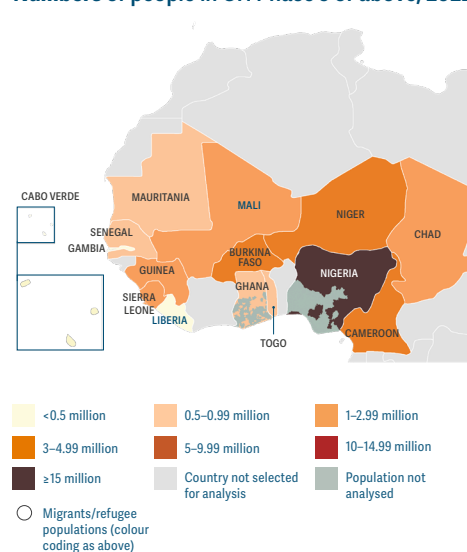
Of the 12 countries covered in both the GRFC 2022 and 2023 editions, six – the Gambia, Guinea, Mauritania, the Niger, Nigeria (21 states and the FCT) and Senegal – recorded at least 50 percent year-on-year increases in the number of people in CH Phase 3 or above, while four – Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad and Mali – recorded increases of 18–40 percent. In Liberia and Sierra Leone, levels of acute food insecurity declined in 2022 but remained at high levels, mostly driven by high food prices, amid sharp currency depreciation and high inflation.

When comparing the same 12 countries with 2021 and 2022 data, the number of people estimated to be in Stressed (CH Phase 2) was nearly 17 percent higher year-on-year, while the number of people estimated to be in Minimal (CH Phase 1) was about 10 percent lower.

Drivers of the crisis, 2022–23

Conflict/insecurity was the main driver of acute food insecurity in six countries: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Mali, the Niger and Nigeria (21 states and the FCT). Although compounded by other drivers, about 34.85 million people faced high levels of acute food insecurity in these countries/

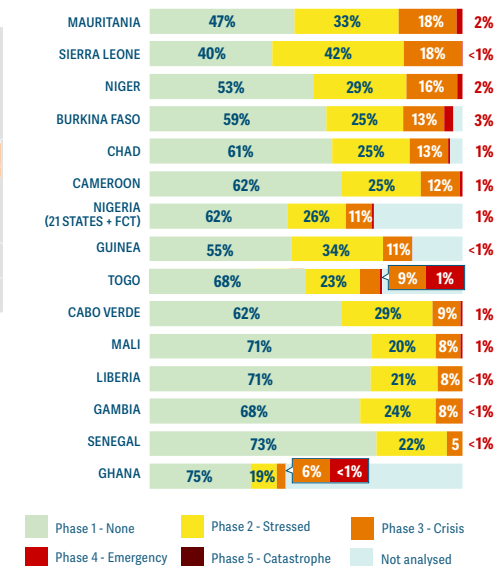
Numbers of people in CH Phase 3 or above, 2022



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.

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



Source: Cadre Harmonisé, March 2022.

territories, mainly due to the persistence of regional security crises in border areas, including the Lake Chad Basin and the Central Sahel, as well as conflict in northwest and southwest regions of Cameroon that triggered large-scale internal and cross-border population displacements, and severely disrupted agricultural livelihoods, pastoral transhumance, markets and trade. Poor security in the most severely affected areas constrained humanitarian access throughout the year,

curtailing the delivery of assistance. Concerns arise due to the increase in violent events in northern border areas of Togo and Ghana, reflecting a spread of the insecurity crisis in the Central Sahel.

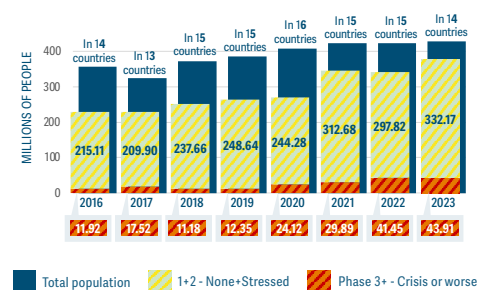
Economic shocks were the primary driver of acute food insecurity in nine countries – Cabo Verde, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mauritania, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo, where about 6.6 million people were estimated to face high levels of

acute food insecurity – but they were also major drivers in conflict-affected countries/territories. Unsustainable debt levels and slow growth, partly attributable to the lingering effects of COVID-19, further compounded by the war in Ukraine, impacted domestic economies and limited the fiscal space to implement social protection measures. Steep currency depreciation and rampant inflation, notably in Ghana and Sierra Leone, had a negative impact on household purchasing power. Reliance on food imports, particularly in Cabo Verde and Mauritania, was an underlying inflationary factor (WFP Economic Explorer, FAO-FPMA tool, accessed 14 March 2023).

Food prices generally increased through 2022, reaching record highs in several countries. The increases were linked to high global food, fuel and fertilizer prices and reduced cross-border trade flows, which resulted from restrictions on exports of cereals and cereal products introduced to protect the domestic supply in Mali, Burkina Faso, Chad and Côte d'Ivoire.

Weather extremes At the regional level, 2022–23 agricultural production was above that of the previous year and the five-year average, and 20 percent above the previous year in the Sahelian countries (CH, November 2022). Erratic and

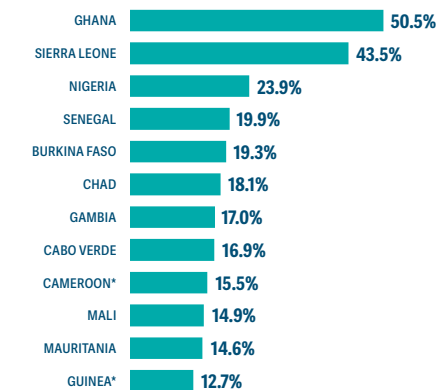
Numbers of people by phase of acute food insecurity, 2016–2023



Twelve countries in the region have been included in all editions of the GRFC: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Gambia, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Sierra Leone. Libya was included as part of the region in previous editions but from GRFC 2023 it is in the Middle East and Northern Africa region.

Source: FSIN.

Food-crisis countries/territories where food price inflation was over 10 percent, December 2022



* Figure for Cameroon as of September 2022 and for Guinea as of July 2022.

Source: WFP Economic Explorer, accessed 10 March 2023.

below-average rains in 2021 resulted in shortfalls of crop production in Sahelian countries, particularly in the Niger, Chad and Mauritania, significantly reducing food availability in 2022. Flooding in 2022 disrupted markets and livelihoods, and caused crop localized losses, constraining local food availability and access. As of December 2022, flooding had affected about 7.05 million people in 14 countries, particularly in Nigeria (21 states and the FCT) and Chad (OCHA, January 2023).

Acute food insecurity since 2016

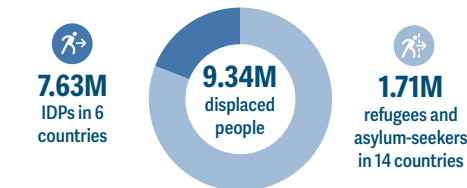
The estimated number of people facing high levels of acute food insecurity in the region has increased since 2016 and more than tripled between 2019 and 2022, from about 12.35 million to 41.45 million, with nearly all of them in the 12 countries/territories that have experienced food crises since 2016. Some of this is due to the expansion of the geographical coverage of the CH analyses since 2021, particularly in Nigeria, as well as multiple and interconnected conflict-related, economic and weather-related shocks. The analysed population at the regional level increased by around 50 percent between 2016 and 2022.

Some countries/territories in the region move in and out of food crisis as they face varying shocks. For instance, in 2023, Ghana was included in the report for the first time, Togo for the second and Cabo Verde for the fourth. Although not included in 2023, Benin has been included once, Côte d'Ivoire five times and Guinea-Bissau six times.

The other 12 countries have faced food crises for each edition of the GRFC since 2017. In these 12 countries, between 2016 and 2022, the number of people in CH Phase 3 nearly quadrupled, from 11 million to 40 million. Four countries have been included as major food crises in all seven years of the GRFC: Cameroon, Chad, the Niger and Nigeria (in 2017, 2018 and 2019 as part of the Lake Chad Basin regional crisis).

DISPLACEMENT

Number of IDPs and refugees, end 2022



Source: UNHCR, IOM, December 2022.

The region is facing a growing displacement crisis with 7.23 million IDPs in six countries, over 1 million more than in 2021, due to conflict and insecurity in the Central Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin. The biggest increases were in northern Nigeria, which had 3.17 million IDPs by the end of 2022; Burkina Faso, which had 1.89 million; and Cameroon, with about 985 000. Together these three countries had about 84 percent of the region's IDPs. Chad, Mali and the Niger had smaller populations of IDPs.

Out of the 1.71 million refugees and asylum-seekers, Chad hosted the highest number, reaching nearly 600 000, mainly from the Sudan. This was followed by: Cameroon (473 900), with refugees mainly from the Central African Republic; the Niger (302 000), with refugees mainly from Nigeria; Mauritania (106 000), with refugees mainly from Mali; and Nigeria (92 000), with refugees mainly from Cameroon.

NUTRITION

Number of children under 5 years old with wasting, in nine major food crises, 2022



Source: IPC, HNO, 2022.

When comparing the SMART 2021 and 2022 results, wasting among children under 5 years increased at the national level in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali and Mauritania. The wasting prevalence was above the 'very high' WHO threshold of 15 percent in Gao in Mali (16.1 percent), in Ennedi Est in Chad (15.7 percent), and in six out of the 12 regions in Mauritania.

The alarming situation across the region – with 12.70 children under 5 years suffering from wasting in nine countries/territories – stemmed from a combination of higher levels of acute food insecurity, high prevalence of diseases associated with poor access to safe water and sanitation services, as well as inadequate food intake. These factors were compounded by unprecedented floods during the 2022 rainy season, particularly in Chad, the Niger and Nigeria. In addition, about 1.18 million pregnant or lactating women were suffering from acute malnutrition, most of whom are in Burkina Faso (800 000) and northern Nigeria (512 000). Furthermore, there were about 415 000 wasted children under 5 years in Guinea, about 204 000 in Cameroon, 176 000 in Sierra Leone and about 138 000 in Mauritania.

Nigeria had the highest number of wasted children at 5.93 million in northeastern and northwestern states. This was followed by the Niger (1.88 million), Chad (1.77 million), Mali (1.48 million) and Burkina Faso (700 000).

Food, nutrition and displacement crisis in the Central Sahel

The Central Sahel region has experienced worsening acute food insecurity and malnutrition over the last three years, underpinned by a complex interplay between conflict and weather shocks amid high socioeconomic vulnerability, which have severely constrained household food availability and access.

The Central Sahel includes Mali, Burkina Faso and western Niger (Tillabéri and Tahoua regions). The 2021–22 Human Development Report ranked these countries among the least developed of 191 countries worldwide: Burkina Faso ranking 184th, Mali 186th and the Niger 189th (UNDP, September 2022).

Since 2019, worsening conflict has disrupted rural livelihoods, markets and trade, and triggered large internal and cross-border population displacements. Access to any remaining basic social services has been interrupted and humanitarian access restricted (CH, November 2022).

The poor security conditions have hampered transhumant movements of pastoralists, thus concentrating livestock in smaller areas and resulting in the depletion of pasture and water points, the deterioration of livestock body condition and an increase in clashes between farmers and pastoral communities over land use. This has caused economic and food losses. In April 2022, insecurity stranded more than 1.3 million livestock in several border areas in West Africa, including the Tahoua region in the Niger and the tri-border Liptako-Gourma area of Mali, Burkina Faso and the Niger (OECD, December 2022).

During the 2022 peak, a record 7.34 million people were estimated to face Crisis or worse (CH Phase 3 or above) levels of acute food insecurity in the Central Sahel region, including 1.03 million people in Emergency (CH Phase 4). This marks a year-on-year increase of 1.7 million people and is about three times higher than in 2019. This regional estimate covers about 3.45 million people in Burkina Faso, 1.84 million in Mali and 2.05 million in western Niger.

In the June–August 2023 lean season, the magnitude of the food crisis in the Central Sahel is expected to slightly decrease, with 6.35 million people projected to face high

levels of acute food insecurity, reflecting a decline in the projections for Mali and western Niger. This is largely due to an improvement in food availability: in 2022, staple crop production in the Sahel was 20 percent above that of 2021.

However, and of extremely high concern, 19 860 people in the Sahel region of Burkina Faso and 1 670 in the region of Ménaka in Mali, are projected to be in Catastrophe (CH Phase 5) in conflict-affected areas experiencing lack of supply in markets and constrained access to livelihood activities, as well as limited humanitarian access (CH, November 2022).

Forced displacement reached new heights

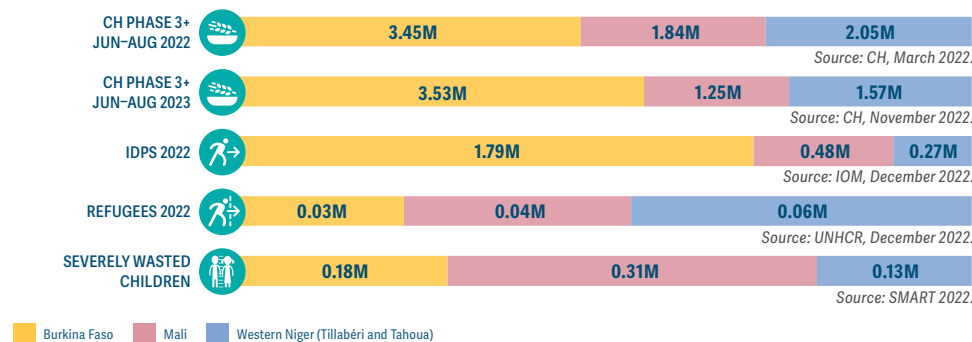
The increase in violent events between 2021 and 2022 resulted in new highs of forced displacement in 2022. By the end of the year, a total of about 2.6 million people were displaced, including 2.5 million IDPs and about 130 000 refugees, across Burkina Faso, Mali and western Niger.

In addition, 100 000 people from Mali were forced to seek refuge in Mauritania, most of them in the Mbera refugee camp in eastern Hodh Ech Chargui region (UNHCR, December 2022). A recent spillover of insecurity into northern parts of Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Togo has caused further cross-border displacements, with several thousand new arrivals of refugees recorded.

The large-scale displacement has had a significant negative impact on food availability and markets as the disruption to livelihoods continued to curtail local crop production and increase reliance of displaced households on markets for food in 2022, adding demand pressure to prices already affected by inflation. This was particularly the case in Burkina Faso and Mali, where prices of staple cereals reached abnormally high levels through 2022, up to 150 percent higher on a yearly basis at the end of the June–August lean season (FAO-GIEWS, September 2022).

Displacement has concentrated demand on limited natural resources in the Central Sahel, including agricultural land, pasture and water, for both displaced

Acute food insecurity, displacement and child wasting in the Central Sahel



and host communities, increasingly jeopardizing social cohesion and fuelling communal conflicts (OCHA, December 2022). High levels of forced displacement are expected to continue into 2023, with an emerging trend of Burkinabe seeking asylum in North Africa and Europe (UNHCR, November 2022).

An alarming nutrition situation

Malnutrition of children and women is driven by lack of access to and availability of social services, as well as violence, displacement, poverty and record-high food prices (PREGEC, November 2022). Around 4.36 million children under the age of 5 were expected to suffer from wasting in 2022, of whom 0.6 million were severely wasted (OCHA, December 2022).

Due to insecurity and violence, 222 health centres across the Central Sahel closed in 2022, depriving communities of access to healthcare. Closure of nutritional care centres disrupted ongoing nutritional programmes.

IDPs faced high levels of malnutrition, with wasting prevalence among children under 5 years above the 15 percent ('very high') WHO threshold in some areas of northern Burkina Faso (Rapid SMART, 2022).



The nutritional status of women and children in the Central Sahel has worsened over the last three years.

Food, nutrition and displacement crisis in the Lake Chad Basin

The security crisis in the Lake Chad Basin, covering the Extrême Nord region of Cameroon, western Chad, northeastern Nigeria and eastern Niger, has continued for over a decade, originating in the Boko Haram insurgency and underscored by climate change, poverty and underdevelopment.

The 2021–22 Human Development Report ranked three of these countries among the least developed of 191 countries worldwide: Nigeria ranking 163rd, the Niger 189th and Chad 190th, while Cameroon was classified with a medium level of human development, ranking 151st (UNDP, September 2022).

The insurgency is one of the world’s most protracted conflicts, marked by abductions, suicide attacks, forced religious conversion, forced and opportunistic recruitment, gender-based violence, human rights violations and difficult humanitarian access. This insecurity and associated internal and cross-border displacement have driven major food crises in this area of West Africa and the Sahel.

In the Lake Chad Basin, the number of people estimated to be in Crisis or worse (CH Phase 3 or above) reached about 5.3 million, including about 700 000 people in Emergency (CH Phase 4), in 2022 (CH March 2022). This is well above the estimated 2.9 million people in 2021 (CH, March 2021).

In addition to worsening security conditions and conflicts, the sharp deterioration of acute food insecurity in 2022 was underpinned by crop production shortfalls in the region in 2021 and heavy flooding from August to December 2022, which affected almost 2 million people in the Lake Chad Basin and displaced 600 000. High food prices coupled with a lack of livelihood opportunities severely constrained household purchasing power.

Approximately 80 percent of the people facing high levels of acute food insecurity were in three states of northeastern Nigeria: Adamawa, Borno and Yobe. During the 2022 peak, between July and August, 4.14 million people were estimated to face high levels of acute food insecurity, including about 590 000 people in Emergency (CH Phase 4). Of high concern, about 504 000 people in

CH Phase 3 or above were in areas with no humanitarian access. During the October–December 2022 period, about 3 000 people faced Catastrophe (CH Phase 5) in the Bama LGA in the Borno state (CH, March 2022).

In 2023, during the June–August lean season period the magnitude of the food crisis in the Lake Chad Basin is expected to increase in the affected areas of Cameroon, Chad and Nigeria, while it is expected to ease in the Diffa region in the Niger, partly driven by an improvement in security conditions. Together, 5.6 million people are projected to be in CH Phase 3 or above, including about 725 000 people in CH Phase 4 and 3 967 people in CH Phase 5, specifically in the inaccessible Bama local government area in Nigeria’s Borno state (CH, November 2022).

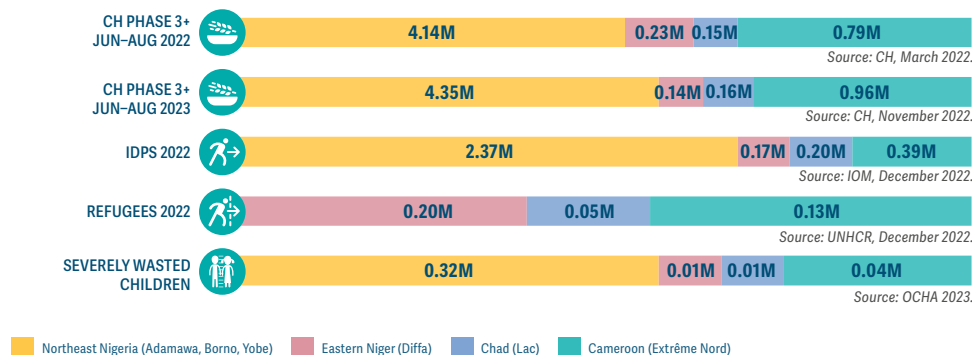
A displacement crisis

The protracted insurgency in the region has driven human rights violations and mass displacement. By the end of 2022, about 3.13 million people were internally displaced, with 2.37 million in Nigeria alone, and an additional 375 000 people were refugees, of whom over 200 000 were in the Niger, over 125 000 in Cameroon and about 50 000 in Chad (IOM, December 2022; UNHCR, December 2022).

An alarming nutrition situation

In the Lake Chad Basin, thousands of children are out of school and cut off from essential services. About 380 000 children under the age of 5 are severely wasted across the areas affected by this conflict in the four countries (OCHA, January 2023). Most of them are in northeastern Nigeria, where more than 1.3 million children were estimated to be suffering wasting and 152 000 pregnant and lactating mothers were acutely malnourished in 2022 (IPC June, 2022). Of particular concern is the fact that the delivery of humanitarian assistance has been hampered in inaccessible areas, particularly in Borno state.

Acute food insecurity, displacement and child wasting in the Lake Chad Basin

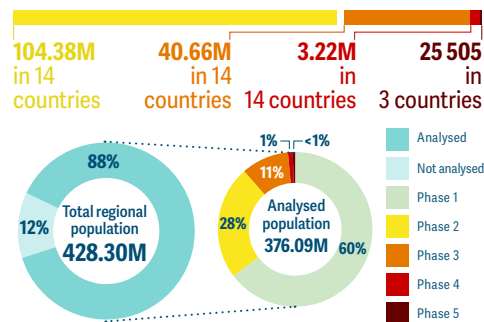


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Out of 2.3 million internally displaced people in northeastern Nigeria, 75 percent of them were in Borno state, where people continued to abandon their homes in 2022 because of the insurgency.

The severity of acute food insecurity is projected to rise in some conflict-affected countries in 2023

43.91M people or **11.7%** of the analysed population were estimated to be in CH Phase 3 or above, in 2023 in 14 countries*



* No projections available for Cabo Verde.
Source: Cadre Harmonisé, November 2022.

Populations in Catastrophe (CH Phase 5)

The severity of the food crisis in the region is expected to worsen, as about 25 500 people were projected to face the highest level of acute food insecurity, Catastrophe (CH Phase 5), during the upcoming 2023 lean season.

The populations expected to face Catastrophe (CH Phase 5) are in areas of Burkina Faso, Mali and Nigeria (26 states and FCT) severely affected by armed conflicts and with limited humanitarian access. In Burkina Faso, about 19 860 people are in four provinces, Oudalan, Séno, Soum, Yagha of the northern Sahel region. In Nigeria (26 states and FCT), about 3 960 people are in the Bama local government area (LGA) of the northeastern Borno state. In Mali, about 1 670 are in the region of Ménaka.

In June–August 2023, the number of people facing CH Phase 3 or above is projected to reach 43.91 million in 14 countries/territories (excluding Cabo Verde), the highest level since the start of the Cadre Harmonisé in 2013. These higher numbers are due to protracted conflicts and worsening insecurity, coupled with high inflation, high food prices and macroeconomic challenges, as well as increased analysis coverage, particularly in Nigeria (26 states and the FCT).

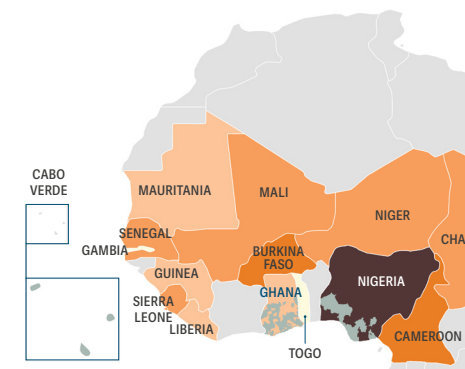
According to the November 2022 CH analyses, an estimated 2.46 million additional people are projected in CH Phase 3 or above in June–August 2023 compared with the 2022 peak which also reflects an 11 percent increase in the population analysed. About 3.22 million people are projected in Emergency (CH Phase 4) in 14 countries/territories of the region and about 25 500 people in Catastrophe (CH Phase 5) in three of them.

The increase in numbers of people in CH Phase 3 or above is projected in five of the 14 countries – Nigeria (26 states and the FCT), Burkina Faso, Senegal, Liberia and Gambia. The biggest increase is in Nigeria (26 states and the FCT), with almost 6 million more people in CH Phase 3 or above, although this might reflect that the analysis included five additional states with 34 million more people analysed. When considering the same 21 states and FCT covered in 2022 and June–August 2023, the increase in the population in CH Phase 3 or above is 3.8 million.

On the positive side, in nine countries – Cameroon, Chad, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger, Sierra Leone and Togo – the number of people projected to be in CH Phase 3 or above in 2023 is projected to decline, mostly driven by improved crop production in 2022 and an associated easing of price increases, which are expected to improve food availability and access.

The largest decline in the number of people in CH Phase 3 or above is projected in the Niger, with a 38 percent decrease, and in Mali (32 percent decrease). In both countries the coverage is comparable to 2022. However, in Mali, 1 671 people are projected to be in Catastrophe (CH Phase 5), driven by extremely poor security conditions in the Ménaka region.

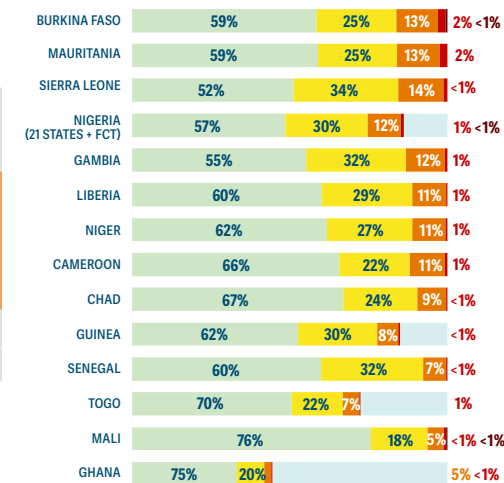
Projected numbers of people projected to be in CH Phase 3 or above, June–August 2023



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Source: Cadre Harmonisé, November 2022.

Share of analysed population by phase of acute food insecurity, June–August 2023



Source: Cadre Harmonisé, November 2022.

Conflict and insecurity are expected to remain the primary driver of acute food insecurity in the countries affected by the Central Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin security crises while economic shocks, compounded by the unfolding effects of the war in Ukraine, are likely to further erode the purchasing power and resilience of households elsewhere in the region.

Prices of staple foods are likely to remain well above their year-earlier levels, in spite of the good 2022 crop harvests, supported by persisting market disruptions, reduced cross-border trade, further currency depreciation and high international prices of commodities, including food, fuel and agricultural inputs.

The production of staple cereals is officially estimated at 76.4 million tonnes, 7 percent above the reduced level in 2021 (CILSS, November 2022).