

# 2024 GLOBAL REPORT ON FOOD CRISES

JOINT ANALYSIS FOR BETTER DECISIONS

## IN BRIEF

**In 2023, 281.6 million people or 21.5 percent of the analysed population faced high levels of acute food insecurity in 59 food-crisis countries/territories.**

Although the overall share of the analysed population facing high levels of acute food insecurity was marginally lower than in 2022, it remained higher than pre-COVID-19 levels (see figure 1).

The number of people facing these conditions increased by 24 million since 2022. Greater analysis coverage, as well as deteriorating acute food insecurity in some countries/territories outweighing improvements in others, underpin the rising numbers.

This fifth consecutive year of growing numbers of people facing high levels of acute food insecurity confirms the **enormity of the challenge of achieving the goal of ending hunger by 2030**. Food crises escalated alarmingly in conflict hotspots in 2023 – notably in Palestine (Gaza Strip) and the Sudan.

The population analysed has risen each year since 2020. Increased coverage between 2022 and 2023 identified 17.5 million additional acutely food-insecure people in need of urgent assistance.

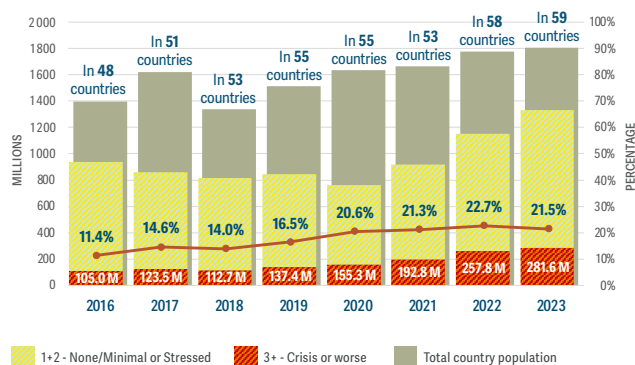
In countries with comparable data between 2022 and 2023, acute food insecurity deteriorated in 12 of them where 13.5 million more people needed urgent food and livelihood assistance. Two-thirds of the additional people were in the Sudan. Meanwhile, food security improved in 17 countries resulting in 7.2 million fewer people facing high levels of acute food insecurity.

The GRFC has identified 36 protracted food crises (i.e. in all eight editions of the report). Nineteen of these were major food crises that have accounted for up to 80 percent of the total population facing high levels of acute food insecurity in each edition. In these 19 countries, the share of the analysed population experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity increased from 17 percent in 2016 to 25 percent in 2021 and has remained at the same level since.

### Conflict drove rapid increase in acute food insecurity and malnutrition in Palestine (Gaza Strip) and the Sudan

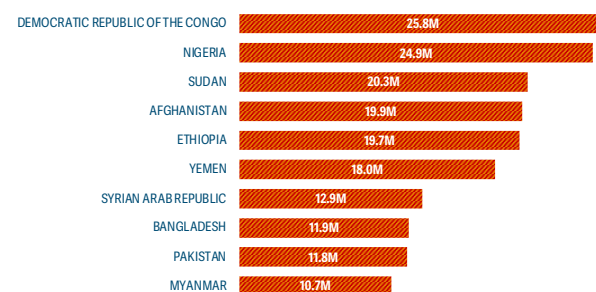
The severe escalation of conflict in the **Sudan** from April 2023 and in **Palestine (Gaza Strip)** from October 2023 led to devastating food crises. The Sudan had the highest number of people in the world facing Emergency (IPC Phase 4) levels of acute food insecurity. The Gaza Strip became the most severe food crisis in IPC and GRFC history with its entire population of 2.2 million in IPC Phase 3 or above. The December 2023 analysis identified more than a quarter of the population or 0.6 million people facing Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) and risk of Famine. By March 2024, Famine was imminent in northern governorates of Gaza and North Gaza.

**FIG. 1 Number of people and share of analysed population in GRFC countries/territories facing high levels of acute food insecurity**



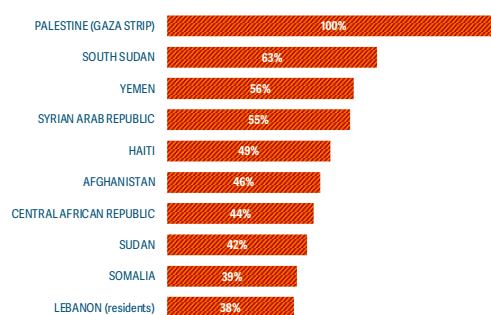
Source: FSIN, using IPC, CH, FEWS NET, WFP, SADC and OCHA data from 2016–2023.

**FIG. 2 Countries/territories with the largest number of people facing high levels of acute food insecurity, 2023**



Sources: IPC TWGs (Bangladesh, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Pakistan, Sudan); CH (Nigeria); FEWS NET (Ethiopia, Yemen); HNO (Afghanistan, Syrian Arab Republic); pre-analysis conducted under HNRP 2024 (Myanmar).

**FIG. 3 Countries/territories with the largest share of analysed population facing high levels of acute food insecurity, 2023**

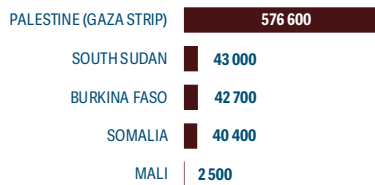


Sources: IPC Global Initiative 2023 (Gaza Strip); IPC TWGs (Central African Republic, Haiti, Lebanon, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan); FEWS NET (Yemen); HNO (Afghanistan, Syrian Arab Republic).

### Severity of acute food insecurity

**Overall, more than 0.7 million people in five countries/territories were projected to face Catastrophe (IPC/CH Phase 5) in 2023** – the highest number in GRFC reporting and almost double that of 2022. In this phase of acute food insecurity, people are facing extreme lack of food and exhaustion of coping capacities leading to starvation, acute malnutrition, and death. They require urgent action to avoid more widespread extreme outcomes.

**FIG. 4 Countries/territories with populations projected to be in Catastrophe (IPC/CH Phase 5) in 2023**



Source: IPC TWGs, 2023; IPC Global Initiative, 2023; CH, 2023.

Besides **Palestine (Gaza Strip)**, populations in **South Sudan, Burkina Faso, Somalia** and **Mali** were projected to face Catastrophe (IPC/CH Phase 5) during their 2023 peak period of acute food insecurity (see figure 4). In **Haiti**, 19 200 people in this phase in September 2022–February 2023 no longer faced these conditions for the rest of 2023. Data were not available in some areas where there are concerns of highly severe food crises, including Ethiopia.

Around **36 million** people in 39 countries/territories with IPC/CH data faced Emergency (IPC/CH Phase 4) levels of acute food insecurity, 4 percent more than in 2022. More than a third of them

were in the Sudan and Afghanistan. Households in this severe situation face large food gaps, which are either reflected in high acute malnutrition rates and excess mortality or mitigated by use of emergency coping strategies.

Around **165.5 million** people in 41 countries/territories with IPC/CH data faced Crisis (IPC/CH Phase 3) levels of acute food insecurity.

Around **292 million** people in 40 countries with IPC/CH data faced Stressed (IPC/CH Phase 2) levels of acute food insecurity.

### Recurrent, intensifying shocks drive food crises

Drivers of acute food insecurity are interlinked and superimposed on structural vulnerabilities that make it harder for households to respond to and recover from a shock. Even so, food-crisis countries/territories tend to be affected by one dominant driver.

**In 2023, conflict/insecurity was the main driver in 20 countries/territories with 135 million people** facing high levels of acute food insecurity. It was the main driver in most of the ten largest food crises (by number or share).

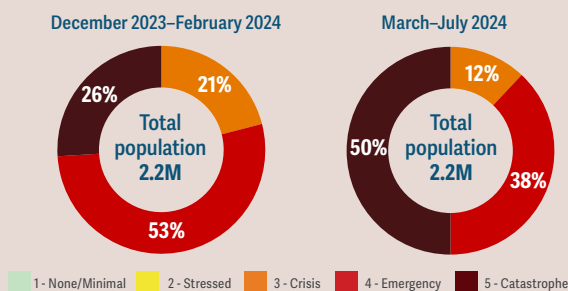
**Economic shocks were the main driver in 21 countries with over 75 million people** facing high levels of acute food insecurity. Despite decreasing international food prices, persistent inflation in food-crisis countries eroded the purchasing power of poorer households. Continued high public debt limited government options to mitigate the effects of high prices.

**Weather extremes were the main driver in 18 countries with 72 million people** facing high levels of acute food insecurity. Many countries were grappling with prolonged recovery from drought or flooding. The El Niño event and climate change-related weather phenomena made 2023 the hottest year on record.

### Early 2024 analyses and alerts raise concerns

By March 2024, Famine was imminent in Gaza and North Gaza Governorates in **Palestine (Gaza Strip)** amid ongoing hostilities and lack of access to essential supplies and services. Through July 2024, half of the population (about 1.1 million people) were projected to experience Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) levels of acute food insecurity, reaching 70 percent in northern

**FIG. 5 Rapidly increasing severity of acute food insecurity in Palestine (Gaza Strip) since December 2023**



Source: IPC Global Initiative, December 2023, March 2024.

governorates (IPC Global Initiative, March 2024). Nearly a third of children were estimated to be suffering from acute malnutrition (GNC, March 2024).

In **Haiti**, nearly 5 million people or half the analysed population were projected to face high levels of acute food insecurity from March–June 2024. This stark increase since the August 2023 projection reflects the surge in armed gang violence severely limiting movement of goods and people, causing internal displacement and driving up food prices (IPC, March 2024).

In the **Sudan**, populations in Khartoum, Gezira, Greater Darfur and Greater Kordofan regions are at risk of catastrophic levels of acute food insecurity in the absence of a cessation of hostilities and significant humanitarian assistance. Immediate action is needed to prevent famine during the 2024 lean season (IPC, March 2024).

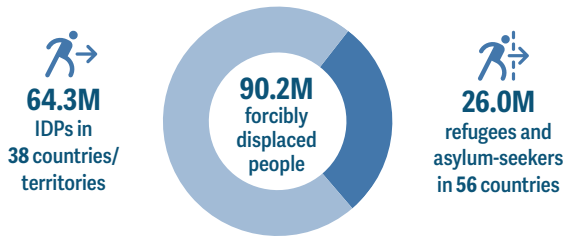
In Southern Africa, the presidents of **Malawi, Zambia** and **Zimbabwe** declared national disasters in March 2024 due to the impact of El Niño-driven drought conditions on crop production.

## Escalating numbers of forcibly displaced people in food-crisis countries/territories in 2023

The main drivers of acute food insecurity have also contributed to escalating numbers of forcibly displaced people over the last decade, most of them displaced in their own countries. The number reached **over 90 million** in 59 food-crisis countries/territories in 2023 – the highest in eight years of GRFC reporting and up from 73 million in 55 food-crisis countries in 2022.

The fastest growing conflict-driven displacement crises of 2023 were **Palestine (Gaza Strip)**, with around 80 percent of its population internally displaced by December 2023, and the **Sudan**, which became the world’s largest internal displacement crisis in 2023.

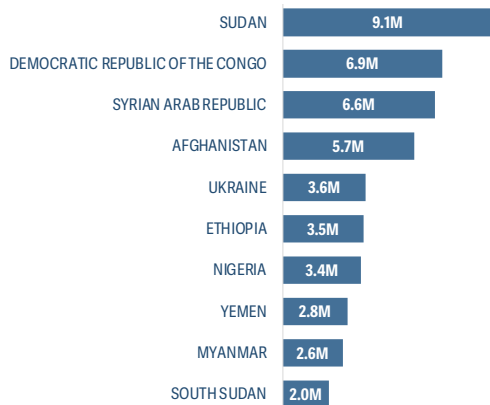
FIG. 6 Number of forcibly displaced people in 59 food-crisis countries/territories, 2023



Sources: IOM, 2023; UNHCR Nowcasted estimate December 2023; UNRWA, 2023.

Forcibly displaced populations face specific vulnerabilities relating to food insecurity including limited access to employment, livelihoods, food and shelter, and reliance on dwindling humanitarian assistance. Where data for displaced populations exist, they show high levels of acute food insecurity and malnutrition. The countries/territories with the highest numbers of IDPs in 2023 – the Sudan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Syrian Arab Republic and Afghanistan – significantly overlap with those with the largest numbers or share of people facing high levels of acute food insecurity (see figures 2, 3 and 7).

FIG. 7 The ten food-crisis countries with the largest IDP populations, 2023



Source: IOM; OCHA; UNHCR.

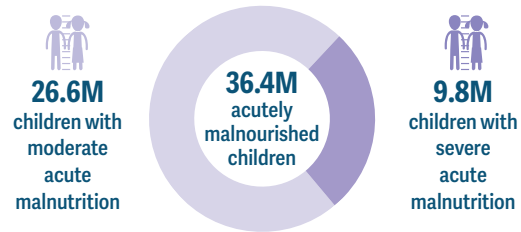
## Acute malnutrition in food crises continued to deteriorate, especially in conflict-affected areas

Over 36 million children under 5 years old in 32 food-crisis countries/territories were suffering from acute malnutrition in 2023, of whom nearly 10 million were severely acutely malnourished and in need of urgent treatment.

Malnutrition is multidimensional, and child nutritional status is determined by multiple factors including poor access to healthy diets, inadequate child and maternal feeding practices, limited health services, poor water, sanitation and hygiene conditions, and high prevalence of infectious diseases as well as acute food insecurity.

Children suffering from severe acute malnutrition are up to 12 times more likely to die than their well-nourished counterparts.

FIG. 8 Number of children under 5 years with acute malnutrition in 32 food crises, 2023



Source: GRFC Nutrition TWG, 2024.

### 9.3M pregnant and breastfeeding women with acute malnutrition in 22 food-crisis countries with data in 2023

Source: GRFC Nutrition TWG, 2024.

The GRFC demonstrates that areas with high levels of acute food insecurity tend to have high levels of child acute malnutrition: 60 percent of acutely malnourished children were in the ten largest food crises (by number of people facing high levels of acute food insecurity). Around 65 percent of the 9.3 million pregnant and breastfeeding women with acute malnutrition were in these same ten food-crisis countries.

In major conflicts, especially in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, Palestine (Gaza Strip) and the Sudan, the nutrition situation of children, and pregnant and breastfeeding women is of great concern. Such conflicts have uprooted millions of people, and caused a severe reduction in the access to and availability of health and nutrition services, humanitarian assistance, and nutritious, affordable and safe foods. Dire living conditions and lack of safe water enable the spread of infectious diseases.

Weather extremes, such as drought and flooding in 2023, negatively affected food production, water security and health, exacerbating malnutrition in many countries, especially in East and Southern Africa.

## The outlook for 2024

Conflict/insecurity – especially in Palestine (Gaza Strip) and the Sudan as well as Haiti – will continue to be the main driver of acute food insecurity throughout 2024.

While El Niño peaked in early 2024, its full impact on food crises – including flooding and drought in parts of eastern Africa, and drought in southern Africa – are likely to manifest throughout the year. Some of its impacts may be positive including better harvests in parts of East Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean region.

Food-importing countries/territories, especially those with weakening currencies, are still grappling with high domestic food prices and weak household purchasing power. As of March 2024, annual food inflation ranged from 38–103 percent in Nigeria, Malawi, Palestine, Zimbabwe and Lebanon (Trading Economics, 2024).

Unsustainable debt levels in some countries/territories amid high interest rates and currency depreciation are expected to further constrain the fiscal capacity of governments to support their populations.

Decreasing humanitarian funding and increasing costs of delivery pose a further threat, already resulting in reduced beneficiary numbers and food assistance rations among many food-insecure populations. This reduction of aid in times of crisis will exacerbate food insecurity, prompting the use of coping strategies that could compromise livelihoods in the medium and longer term, as well as increase the risk of malnutrition among women and children.

In **Central and Southern Africa**, the outlook is concerning due to the impacts of El Niño-related drought disasters in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe, and rainfall deficits in Madagascar and Mozambique.

In **East Africa**, the situation in the Sudan is rapidly deteriorating. The risk of weather extremes and conflict escalation in areas of Ethiopia and South Sudan could drive catastrophic levels of acute food insecurity. Improvements are expected in Burundi and Kenya.

In **West Africa and the Sahel**, persistent conflict coupled with economic shocks are expected to maintain high levels of acute food insecurity. New CH data from March 2024 showed a deteriorating situation in a number of countries, notably in Mali where 2 500 people were projected to face Catastrophe (CH Phase 5).

In **Asia**, the outlook for 2024 is mixed. Should economic stability hold in Afghanistan, acute food insecurity was projected to make gradual improvements – though dryness in late 2023 may impact spring and summer crops. Escalating violence in Myanmar threatens to drive more displacement and acute food insecurity.

In **Latin America and the Caribbean**, Haiti is facing a worse food crisis in 2024 than projected in August 2023 linked to escalating gang violence. Significant improvements are projected in Dominican Republic and Guatemala linked to improved food availability and increased household purchasing power.

In the **Middle East and North Africa**, the outlook for 2024 is extremely concerning due to the intense conflict and restricted humanitarian access in Palestine (Gaza Strip), and the risk of regional spread of conflict and intensifying macroeconomic crises.

## Acute food insecurity and nutrition data: a vital component in understanding, solving and preventing food crises



Food security analyses have been expanding – particularly in vulnerable areas – since 2020, and covered an additional 227 million people in 2023 compared with 2022. However, data gaps remain a challenge with populations in 14 food-crisis countries not accounted for due to lack of data or data not meeting GRFC technical requirements. Lack of sustained investment and monitoring capacity have resulted in fragmented nutritional data, exacerbated by heightened conflict and restricted humanitarian access. Disaggregated, systematic data collection and analysis are lacking among forcibly displaced populations. Improved understanding of their acute food insecurity and malnutrition situations would allow for the better design of medium/long term responses to complement short-term assistance.

### What is the GRFC?

The GRFC 2024 is a collaborative effort among 16 partners to achieve an independent and consensus-based assessment of acute food insecurity that informs humanitarian and development action. Published by the Food Security Information Network (FSIN) in support of the Global Network against Food Crises (GNAFC), the main data sources are the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) and the Cadre Harmonisé (CH), which estimate the populations in need of food, nutrition and/or livelihood assistance. When data from these sources are not available, estimates are derived from IPC-compatible Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), the WFP's Consolidated Approach for Reporting Indicators (CARI) or country-specific number of people in need (PiN) for the food security sector provided by the OCHA Humanitarian Needs Overviews (HNO).

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