ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY | An improving situation by late 2023 but still among the world’s largest and most persistent food crises.

**Peak numbers of people (in millions) by phase of acute food insecurity, 2016–2024**

- **Economic shocks** Domestic food prices fell but households faced stagnant wages, high unemployment, dwindling savings and reduced public spending. Bans on opium cultivation dented farmers’ incomes. The economy grappled with a lack of development aid and women being banned from employment (WFP, September 2022). Political instability in neighbouring countries limited labour migration, while repatriations from Pakistan may put pressure on already strained resources (IPC, December 2023; UNHCR, November 2023).

- **Conflict/insecurity** Security continued to improve in 2023 but humanitarians still faced access restrictions, including a suspension of aid to Ghor province in January–July (WFP, September 2023).

- **Weather extremes** Climatic conditions improved but a 30–35 percent wheat deficit was anticipated after a third consecutive drought year (WFP June 2023).

- **Natural disasters** The October 2023 earthquakes in Hirat caused widespread destruction that affected about 275,000 people (IPC, December 2023).

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**Project 2024 (November 2023 – March 2024)**

- **19.9M** people or 46% of the total population were estimated to face high levels of acute food insecurity during the 2022/23 winter lean season. Of them, around 6.5 million people were in Emergency (IPC Phase 4). Compared with the same period of the previous year, the number of people facing high levels of acute food insecurity was 13 percent lower.

**Projections 2024 (November 2023 – March 2024)**

- **15.8M** people or 36% of the total population were estimated to face high levels of acute food insecurity during the 2022/23 winter lean season. Of them, around 3.6 million people were estimated to be in Emergency (IPC Phase 4).

This represents an improvement due to good harvests, reduced inflation and humanitarian food assistance, despite an expectation of extreme assistance cuts. However, the numbers did not factor in the impacts of the severe winter drought on crop production.

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