Congo

ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY | Around one-third of residents and two-thirds of refugees faced high levels of acute food insecurity.

PEAK 2023 (OCTOBER–NOVEMBER)

1.9M people or **31%** of the country's total population faced high levels of acute food insecurity during the peak of the lean season. Around **1.7%** faced severe acute food insecurity, according to CARI methodology (WFP, forthcoming).

Direct comparison with 2022 is not possible as the country did not have an assessment meeting GRFC technical requirements.

There are no projections for 2024.

DISPLACEMENT

0.1M forcibly displaced people by 2023

0.03M IDPs

0.07M refugees and asylum-seekers

Source: IDMC, 2023,

Source: UNHCR Nowcasted estimate, December 2023.

Around 70 000 refugees and asylum-seekers, 71 percent of them women and children, have fled conflict in Democratic Republic of the Congo and Central African Republic, and others are unable to voluntarily return to Rwanda (UNHCR, December 2023).

Refugee populations have mostly settled in the northern departments of Brazzaville, Likouala and Plateaux and they rely heavily on humanitarian assistance.

According to a 2022 assessment in Bétou and Bouémba refugee sites, the food security situation deteriorated compared with the previous year, more pronouncedly for asylum-seekers from Democratic Republic of the Congo than refugees from Central African Republic. Some 68 percent of asylum-seekers and 63 percent of refugees were food insecure. Around 21 percent of asylum-seekers and 14 percent of refugees faced severe acute food insecurity (WFP, September 2022).

More than 20 percent had poor food consumption (according to the FCS), which is almost double the 2021 assessment, and over half spent more than 75 percent of their income on food, an indicator of very high food insecurity (WFP, September 2022).

DRIVERS OF THE CRISIS 2023–2024

Weather extremes Congo is prone to recurrent flooding along the river corridor, affecting around 0.2 million people each year. Extreme rains since October 2023 led the Oubangui, a tributary of the Congo River, to overflow, causing unprecedented floods, the worst in six decades. On 29 December, the government declared a state of emergency due to flooding (UN, January 2024). Around 2 300 hectares of cultivated land were flooded and, in the north, access remained challenging for months (OCHA, January 2024).

Economic shocks Both the oil and non-oil sectors continued sustaining the Congolese economy in 2023 after growing by an estimated 1.5 percent in 2022. However, GDP growth was negative in 2022 and poverty incidence increased slightly to an estimated 46.6 percent (WB, September 2023).

The country is highly susceptible to global food price fluctuations since it imports 70 percent of its food requirements. In 2023, increased domestic demand drove food inflation, which stood at 4.2 percent in November 2023 (WFP, January 2024).

Conflict/insecurity The country hosts refugees and asylum-seekers who have fled conflict/insecurity in Rwanda three decades ago and more recently in Central African Republic and Democratic Republic of the Congo. Both host and displaced communities face food shortages and limited livelihood opportunities (WFP, September 2022).

ACUTE MALNUTRITION

0.1M children under 5 years old with acute malnutrition, 2023

0.06M MAM   0.04M SAM

Source: UNICEF WCARO database, 2023.

0.03M pregnant and breastfeeding women with acute malnutrition, 2023

Source: SMART 2021.

Acute malnutrition affects 5.2 percent of children under 5 years, of whom 1.4 percent are severely acutely malnourished, corresponding to almost 39 000 children. Around 33 700 pregnant and breastfeeding women suffer from acute malnutrition (MUAC <23 cm). Nearly half (48 percent) of Central African refugee children and 30 percent of asylum-seekers from Democratic Republic of the Congo are chronically malnourished (UNHCR, July 2021).