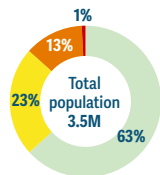
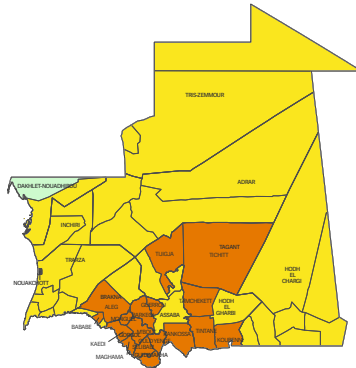


## ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY | Despite continued economic and weather challenges, food security improved in Mauritania.

### PEAK 2023 (JUNE–AUGUST)

**0.5M** people or 13% of the total population faced high levels of acute food insecurity. Of them, 28 000 were in Emergency (CH Phase 4).

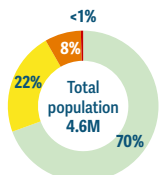
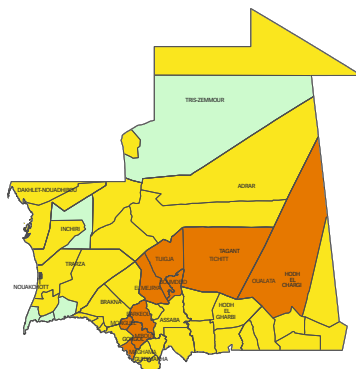
This number has almost halved since the peak period of 2022 when the country was still experiencing the effects of the 2021 drought that decimated local food production.



Source: CH Mauritania, March 2023.

### PROJECTION 2024 (JUNE–AUGUST)

**0.4M** people or 8% of the analysed population projected to face high levels of acute food insecurity. Of them, 7 100 are projected in CH Phase 4. The reduction of 0.1 million people assumes good 2023 irrigated rice production.



Source: CH Mauritania, November 2023.

### DRIVERS OF THE CRISIS 2023–2024

**Economic shocks** High prices of food continued to strain the most vulnerable populations, despite annual food inflation declining from a 16 percent peak in March 2023 to 5 percent by December 2023 (WFP Economic Explorer, 2024).

Prices of local staple cereals declined seasonally, with adequate market

supplies from the harvest, but still remained high. Overall, prices of rice were 60 percent above the five-year average and wheat 43 percent above by October 2023 (Mauritania CH, November 2023).

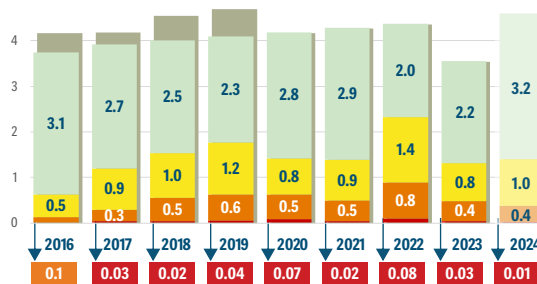
**Weather extremes** In 2023, Mauritania faced dry spells in July and August, impacting pastures and rainfed crops and necessitating re-sowing in various areas. Rainfall deficits particularly affected poor households in northern agropastoral and southeastern pastoral zones. While rice production increased in 2023, production of rainfed sorghum, millet and maize declined. However, the aggregate cereal output was still slightly above the five-year average.

### DISPLACEMENT

**0.1M** refugees and asylum-seekers by 2023

Source: UNHCR Nowcasted estimate, December 2023.

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



Source: CH Mauritania.

**History of the food crisis** A lower-middle-income country, Mauritania has been included in all eight GRFC editions largely due to the impact of weather extremes on food production. It has been classified as a major food crisis only once – in the GRFC 2023 – as about 20 percent of the population faced high levels of acute food insecurity in June–August 2022.

High temperatures and uneven rainfall adversely affected pastures in the north and southeast, prompting early internal transhumance and reliance on animal feed. This situation was exacerbated by over 80 bushfires reported by 30 September, 2023 (FEWS NET, November 2023).

**Conflict/insecurity** By the end of 2023, UNHCR estimates that Mauritania hosted approximately 118 000 refugees and

asylum-seekers, predominantly from Mali, fleeing escalating conflicts. Residing mainly in the M'bera Camp, more than half of them lack regular work, with a small fraction engaged in daily labour or trade. The majority rely on activities such as livestock rearing, domestic work or handicrafts, and are heavily dependent on humanitarian food aid to meet their consumption needs (FEWS NET, November 2023).

### ACUTE MALNUTRITION

**0.2M** children under 5 years old with acute malnutrition, 2023



Source: WCARO Database, December 2023.

Two consecutive years of SMART surveys pointed to High and worsening acute malnutrition levels in Mauritania. The GAM levels passed the emergency threshold of 15 percent in most regions of the country, with Guidimaka being of greatest concern (CH, March 2023).

### DRIVERS OF ACUTE MALNUTRITION 2023–2024

**Inadequate practices** At the national level, 60 percent of children under 6 months benefited from exclusive breastfeeding (SMART, 2021), while only 22 percent of children aged 6–23 months received a Minimum Acceptable Diet.

35 percent of residents use water from unprotected wells as their main source of drinking water, which increases the risk of waterborne diseases such as diarrhoea (SMART 2021).

**Inadequate services** The increased influx of refugees fleeing insecurity in Mali, as well as returning Mauritians, put additional pressure on scarce resources, including basic services such as health, nutrition, water and sanitation (UNICEF, 2023).

**Lack of food** Acute food insecurity linked to increasing food prices is a contributing factor to increasing undernutrition. Micronutrient deficiencies account for anaemia in approximately 66 percent of children aged 6–59 months and 43 percent of women of reproductive age (15–49 years), indicating a severe public health problem for both (SMART 2021).

In Guidimaka, which has the lowest rate of tap water use at 50 percent,