DG ECHO
Reports on food security

Release nº 5 – May 2023

Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations

Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid

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List of Organisations

DG ECHO	Directorate General for Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid
DG INTPA	Directorate General for International Partnerships
DG NEAR	Directorate General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (UK)
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IFRC	International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IOM	International Office for Migration
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OXFAM	Oxford Committee for Famine Relief
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
WFP	World Food Program

List of acronyms

CCCM	Camp Coordination and Camp Management
COHAFA	Council working party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid
CVA	Cash and Voucher Assistance
DREF	Disaster Response Emergency Fund
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EDF	European Development Fund
EiE	Education in Emergencies
ERP	Emergency Response Plan
FSL	Food Security and Livelihoods
GFD	General Food Distribution
GNFC	Global Network Against Food Crises
GRFC	Global Report on Food Crises

HIP	Humanitarian Implementation Plan
HDP	Humanitarian – Development – Peace nexus
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IPC/CH	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
MAM	Moderate Acute Malnutrition
MEB	Minimum Expenditure Basked
MPCT	Multi-purpose Cash Transfer
MSNA	Multi-Sector Needs Assessment
PLW	Pregnant Lactating Women
RHD	Refugee Hosting District
RMRP	Refugee and Migrant Response Plan
RPCA	Food Crisis Prevention Network
RRM	Rapid Response Mechanism
SAM	Severe Acute Malnutrition
SMEB	Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket

Executive summary

Food security keeps deteriorating globally according to the latest Global Report on Food Crises (GRFC), published on 3 May 2023. There are currently **around 258 million** acutely food-insecure people (IPC/CH phase 3 or above or equivalent), who required urgent assistance in 58 food-crisis countries and territories in 2022.

At least **376 000 people worldwide faced catastrophic conditions** of food insecurity (IPC/CH phase 5) in 2022 in Somalia, South Sudan, Yemen, Afghanistan, Haiti, Nigeria and Burkina Faso. The number of countries/territories concerned is the highest in the history of the GRFC. Whilst the total figure is lower than in 2021, it should be noted that the report could not integrate data from Ethiopia, where over 400 000 people were in IPC phase 5 in the last edition of the report.

Since 2022, food insecurity has been exacerbated by the **direct effects of Russia's invasion of Ukraine** on the global economy, including on food prices, global supply of grains, as well as on the price of energy and fertilisers. These factors compounded food crises that were already raging due to conflicts, weather extremes (notably droughts and flooding resulting from climate change), and economic shocks due to the fallout from the Covid-19 pandemic. The Black Sea Grain Initiative, and the EU Solidarity Lanes, managed to alleviate upward price pressures.

Whilst hunger has more than doubled in the past seven years, **funding to address it is lagging behind**, and the appeals for the main food crises remain severely underfunded[1]. Furthermore, the humanitarian system overly relies on only a limited number of donors.

Prospects for 2023 are dim, with several facts indicating that global food security is unlikely to improve in the next months. Specialised agencies warn that hunger is likely to further increase in the immediate future[2].

EU humanitarian assistance is funded through the European Commission's **Directorate General for Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid** (DG ECHO). It is designed and implemented in a nexus approach, whereby synergies between humanitarian, development and peace actions are actively pursued and absolutely necessary. DG ECHO has **reacted swiftly** and decisively to address the hunger crisis by substantially increasing funding for countries most at risk and stepping-up advocacy efforts.

In 2022 alone, DG ECHO allocated up to EUR 950 million for humanitarian food and nutrition assistance, 64% more than in 2021, and almost 90% more than in 2020. In 2023, DG ECHO aims at increasing or at least maintaining appropriate levels of funding, and is working to mobilise additional funds.

Against this backdrop, the objectives of the present report are threefold. Firstly, to provide information on the situation in the countries and regions considered of maximum concern from a food security perspective. Secondly, to outline DG ECHO's interventions to meet rising humanitarian needs. And lastly, to identify critical needs and opportunities for coordinated action against food insecurity, with a view to scale-up assistance to the populations most in need.

The report encapsulates information collected from DG ECHO's field and geographical desks in April 2023, and is intended to provide a more granular picture of the realities from a field perspective. This knowledge is further complemented with references to public sources of information.

[1] https://fts.unocha.org/appeals/overview/2023.

[2] Global Humanitarian Overview 2023.

This report provides detailed information about 28 countries. These include the seven countries with populations facing starvation (Catastrophe, IPC/CH phase 5), namely **Somalia, South Sudan, Yemen, Afghanistan, Haiti, Nigeria and Burkina Faso**. As mentioned above, despite the lack of recent data, **Ethiopia** is also highly likely to have significant numbers of people in this IPC phase.

In addition to these, the report covers the **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Kenya, Uganda, Sudan, Syria, Lebanon, the Central African Republic (CAR), the Sahel region (Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Chad), Zimbabwe, Madagascar, Mozambique, Central America, Venezuela, Colombia, Myanmar and Pakistan.**

In 2022, **economic shocks** became a prominent driver of hunger, exacerbated by the socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19 and the repercussions of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The economic resilience of poor countries has dramatically decreased, and they now face extended recovery periods and less ability to cope with future shocks. Many countries are affected by high inflation, notably on food prices, and debt stress. Critical cases include, for instance, Afghanistan, Lebanon, South Sudan or Syria.

Examples include Venezuela, with an estimated inflation of 155%, Zimbabwe, which has the highest food inflation in the world at 121%, Lebanon, with a 190% interannual inflation in February 2023 and a highly depreciated currency, or Ethiopia, whose currency depreciated 194% versus the USD.

Climate change and related weather extremes remain a key driver of food insecurity in many of the countries under analysis. Severe droughts are affecting food security in e.g., the Horn of Africa (Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia), Madagascar or Afghanistan, and important damage has been caused to crops and livelihoods in e.g. Chad, Madagascar, Pakistan or Mozambique.

Lastly, escalating internal and regional **conflicts** continue to have a disproportionate impact on food security (alongside its four pillars of availability, access, utilisation and stability), as well as on livelihoods, markets access, crop yields and the provision of essential services. This translates into the higher numbers of severely food insecure people. In this respect, countries like **Burkina Faso**, **Mali, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Myanmar and Haiti** – among others – are severely affected.

Most of the countries under analysis are faced with multiple overlapping challenges at the same time: high food inflation, currency depreciation, debt stress, displacement, increasing insecurity, prolonged effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, structural poverty and lack of governance are only some of the additional causes contributing to the exacerbation of the global food crisis.

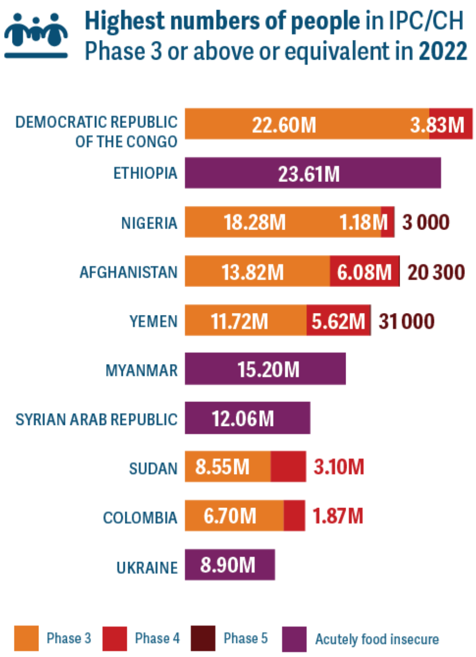
1. Global picture

On 3 May 2023, the latest Global Report on Food Crises (GRFC), covering the year 2022, was published. It provides the most recent, reliable and detailed picture of global acute food insecurity. This report estimates at nearly 258 million the number of people in need of food assistance in 58 countries and territories, compared to 193 million at the end of 2021.

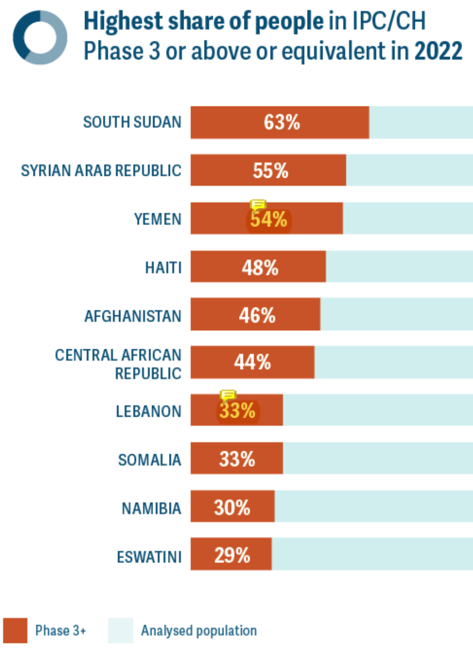
This is the highest number in the history of the GRFC and indicates a 38% increase since last year. Whilst this largely driven by the increase in the population analysed, the proportion of the population analysed that are in IPC/CH phase 3 or above also increased, indicating that the situation has worsened in absolute terms.

This figure confirms a daunting trend: the number of people in acute food insecurity has increased systematically since the first edition of the report, and is now 2.5 times higher than in 2016.

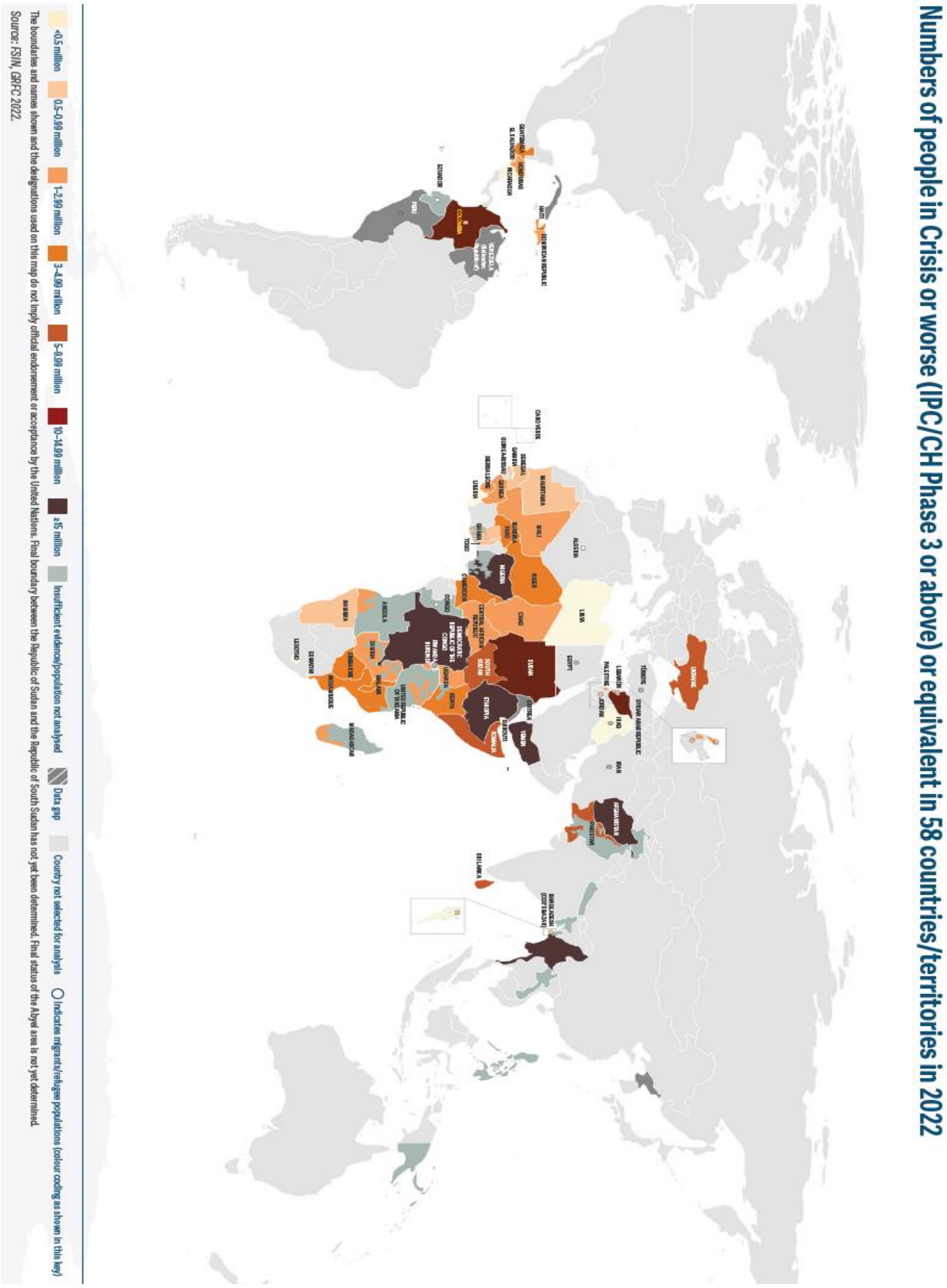
The most significant increases in food insecurity were observed in Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia and Kenya. The largest crises in absolute terms are the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Afghanistan and Yemen. Three countries have more than half of their population in a situation of acute food insecurity: South Sudan, Syria and Yemen.



Source: IPC TWG 2022, HNO 2022 and 2023 and CH.

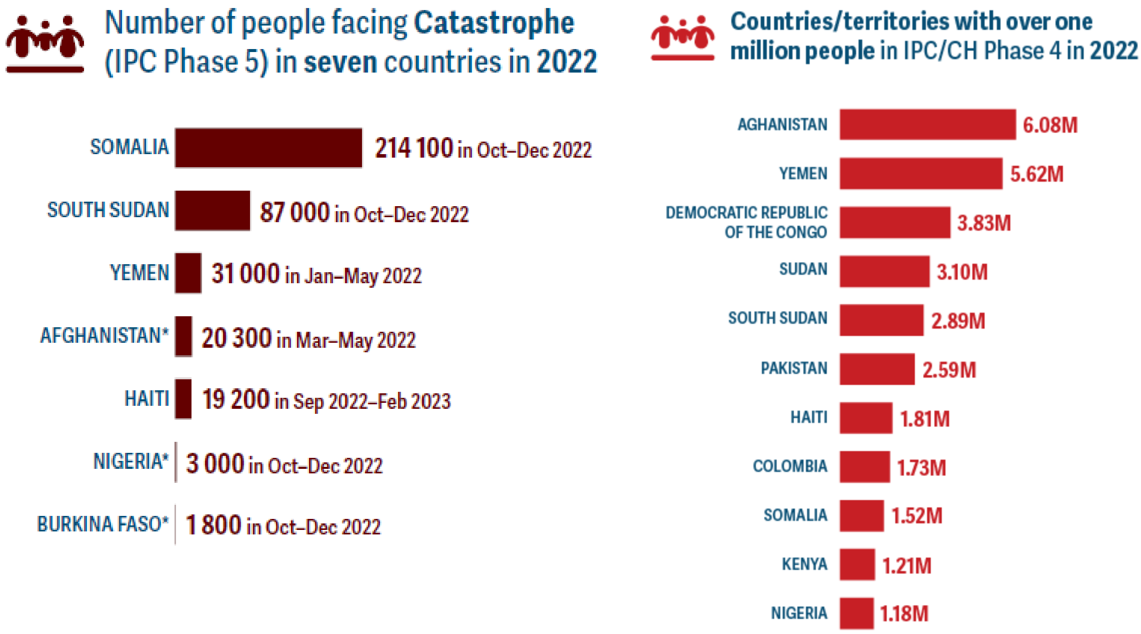


Source: IPC TWG 2022, HNO 2023.



Source: Global Report on Food Crises, May 2023

Not only global numbers, also the severity of hunger remains very high. At least 376 000 people faced catastrophic conditions of food insecurity (IPC/CH phase 5) in 2022 in seven countries – the highest number in the history of the GRFC. It must be noted that this figure does not integrate data from Ethiopia, where over 400 000 people were in IPC phase 5 in the last edition of the report. Almost 39 million people in 42 countries were in IPC/CH phase 4, only one step away from starvation.



Source: Global Report on Food Crises, May 2023

In the September 2022 Hunger Hotspots report, six countries were considered to be at risk of famine: Ethiopia, Nigeria, South Sudan, Yemen, Afghanistan, and Somalia. In this last country, the Hunger Hotspots report actually projected the occurrence of a famine as of October, unless urgent action was taken. Humanitarian efforts were intensified and the declaration of a famine in Somalia has been averted so far. However, the risk of famine remains, and highly depends on the sustained provision of humanitarian assistance.

As mentioned above, new countries may join this list in the next edition, as famine-like conditions (IPC/CH phase 5) have extended to new countries.

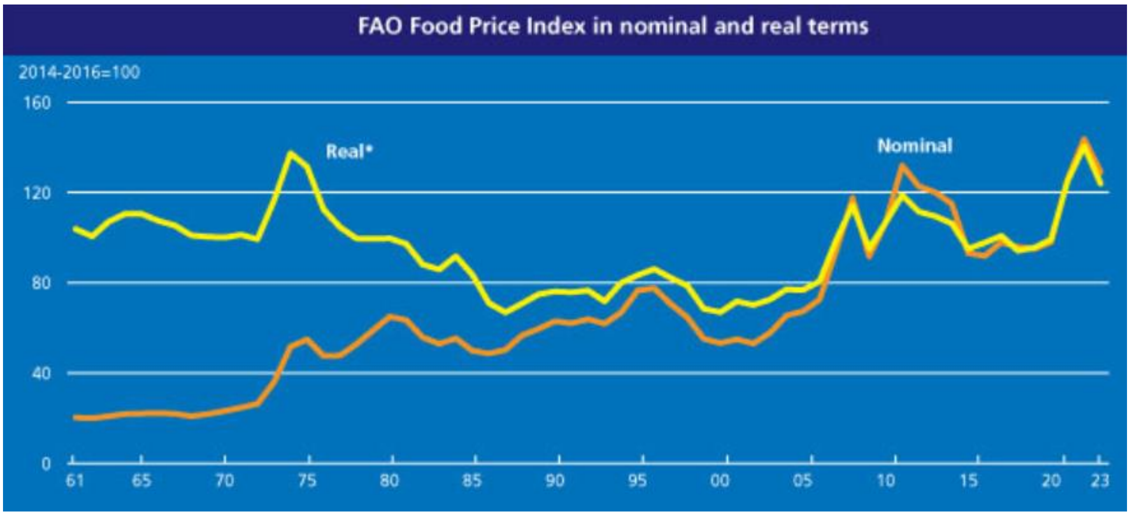
The drivers of food insecurity remain conflict, global and local economic shocks, and weather extremes, against a background of poverty and inequality. In the last years, the successive effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine have accelerated the trend.

Prospects for 2023 are dim. Several facts indicate that food security is unlikely to improve globally in the next months. Even if food prices have been decreasing in the last year, they still remain very high in historical terms. Furthermore, the increase of commodity prices, notably energy and fertilisers, contributes to soaring inflation, and puts many countries under serious debt stress (especially low-income food importing countries). With few exceptions, most food crises show deteriorating trends.

1.1. How the Russian invasion of Ukraine has exacerbated the global food crisis

The impact of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on the increase of global food insecurity has been considerable, due to the major contributions of Ukraine and the Russian Federation to the global production and trade of fuel, agricultural inputs and essential food commodities. While quantifying the exact impact is not possible, the conflict continues to significantly affect food insecurity, and its impacts are affecting both global and domestic economies, particularly in import-dependent countries whose fragile economic resilience had already been battered by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The most immediate and obvious effect of the invasion has been the increase in global food prices. Before the invasion, these were already at a ten-year high due to the economic effects of Covid-19, as can be seen in the graph below. The invasion further increased prices, as both Russia and Ukraine were major food exporters, and together provided one third of global cereal supply, and 80% of global sunflower oil. February 2022 reached the highest level since the inception of the FAO Food Price index.



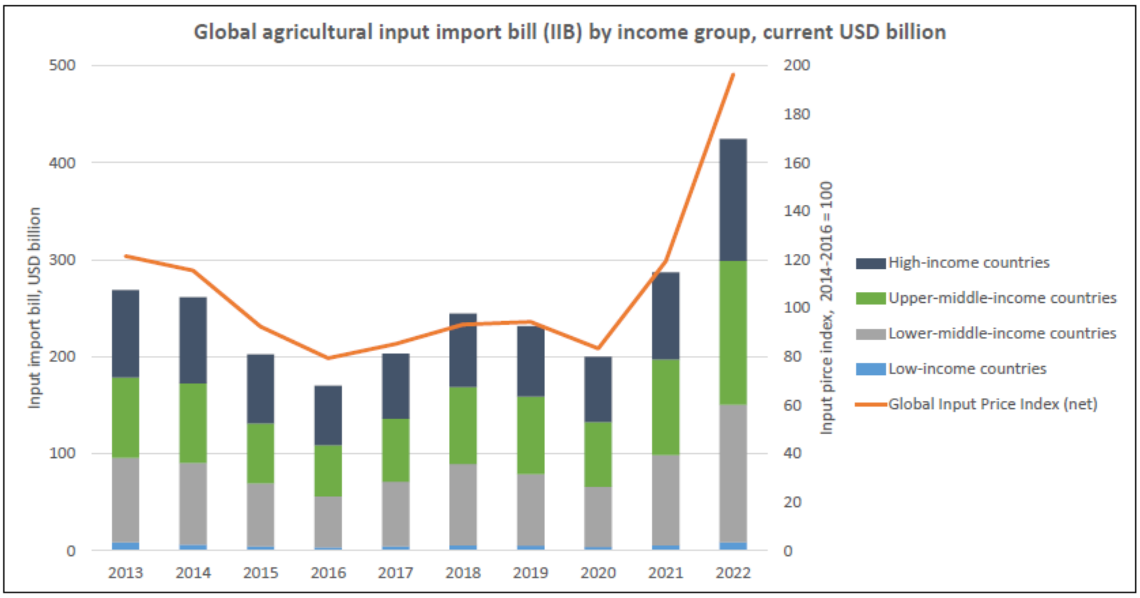
Source: FAO Food Price Index

Food prices stabilised in the second quarter of 2022, decreased to pre-invasion levels after the signature of the Black Sea Grain Initiative (BSGI) in July, and have decreased since. End of April 2023, the initiative had facilitated the export of around 29 million tonnes from Ukraine, mostly corn and wheat, 56% of which reached developing countries. In addition, EU solidarity lanes established in May 2022 facilitated the export of a total of 32 million tonnes, including grain and other agricultural produce not covered by the BSGI.

However, the BSGI did not fully stabilise markets, as quantities exported from Ukraine remain below historical levels, the agreement needs to be renewed periodically and is under constant threat, and global trade patterns have been significantly altered. Food prices are thus expected to remain volatile and high in the next couple of years.

Beyond food prices, the Russian invasion is also impacting food security through its negative effect on the prices of energy and fertiliser – which were already very high before the invasion. Fertiliser prices, despite recent decreases, are almost two times their 2019 level. While farmers in developed regions are likely to maintain high levels of fertiliser use, in poorer countries fertiliser use is expected to decline. Therefore, global grain supplies are expected to tighten in 2023.

The combination of elevated commodity prices, increasing production costs, and persistent currency depreciations translate into higher domestic food price and considerable debt stress in many countries, especially low-income, food importing countries with macroeconomic difficulties and limited coping capacities. This includes many countries in the MENA region and Sub- Saharan Africa, some of which were already facing serious food crises.



Source: FAO, Trade Data Monitor (TDM), FAO calculations

Soaring food and fuel prices also compromise the ability of humanitarian actors to supply food to the areas with the direst needs, leading to a reduction of food assistance that is further aggravating some of the world's worst food crises.

The food crisis is expected to continue through 2023: high fertiliser prices, compounded by the decrease of Ukrainian exports and skyrocketing energy costs, will have a negative impact on agricultural productivity and global markets in the next months. The outlook of the worst food crises (see sections below) is generally negative, pointing at a global deterioration of food security.

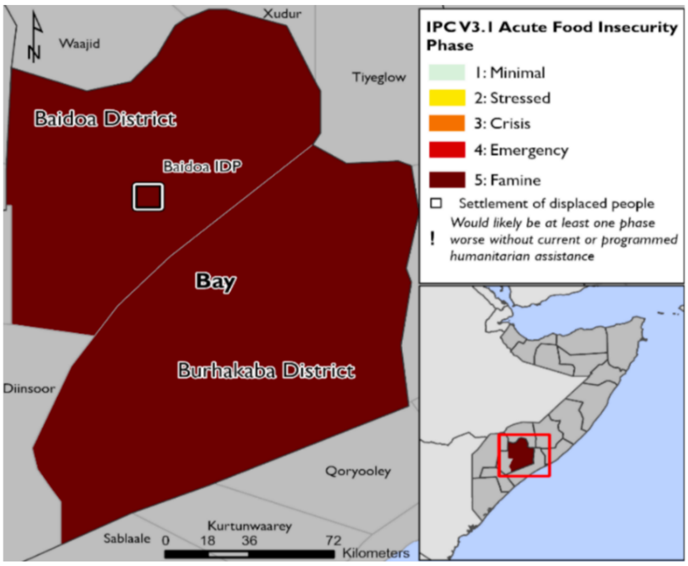
1.2. Drought in the Horn of Africa and famine forecast in Somalia

While the famine forecast (by the Famine Review Committee) for 2022 was narrowly averted, some areas are expected to be in Catastrophe (IPC/CH phase 5) in the most affected zones across Somalia. In particular, populations in Baidoa and Mogadishu IDP sites established after April 2022 and in Burhakaba district remain at risk of famine.

Deteriorating food security and acute malnutrition conditions are expected in the next months, due to the impacts of five consecutive seasons of below-average to poor rainfall, an ongoing rainfall from April to June 2023 also expected to be below-average, and high food prices, exacerbated by conflict/insecurity and disease outbreaks.

The drought in the Horn of Africa started in 2020 and has stretched over five rainy seasons, making it the most extensive and severe in four decades. It has caused a dramatic increase of acute food insecurity in the three countries, affecting up to 19-21 million people. It has also caused over 1.5 million displacements, and may lead to the first famine declaration in Somalia in six years.

The last rainy season (October – December 2022) was also below average in certain areas. Due to this, the number of people in need of urgent food assistance could increase to an estimated 23-26 million people, including more people in famine-like situation.



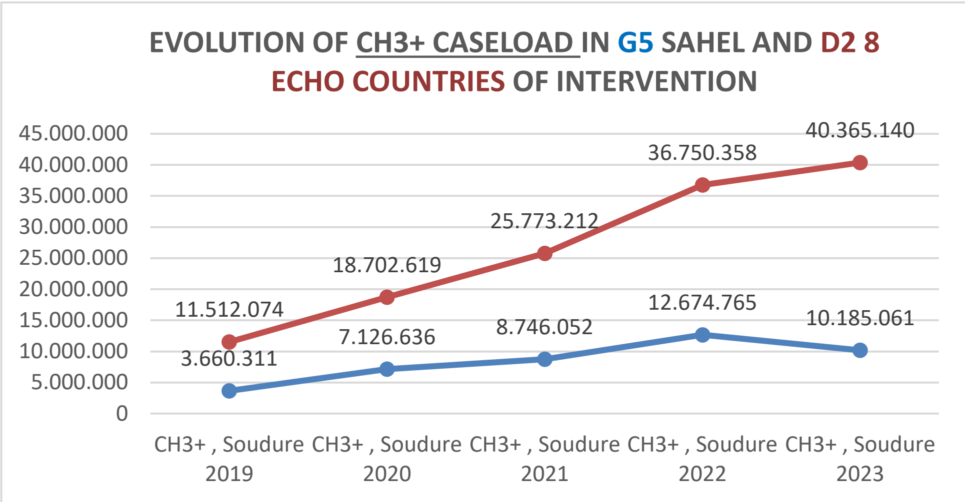
Source: IPC

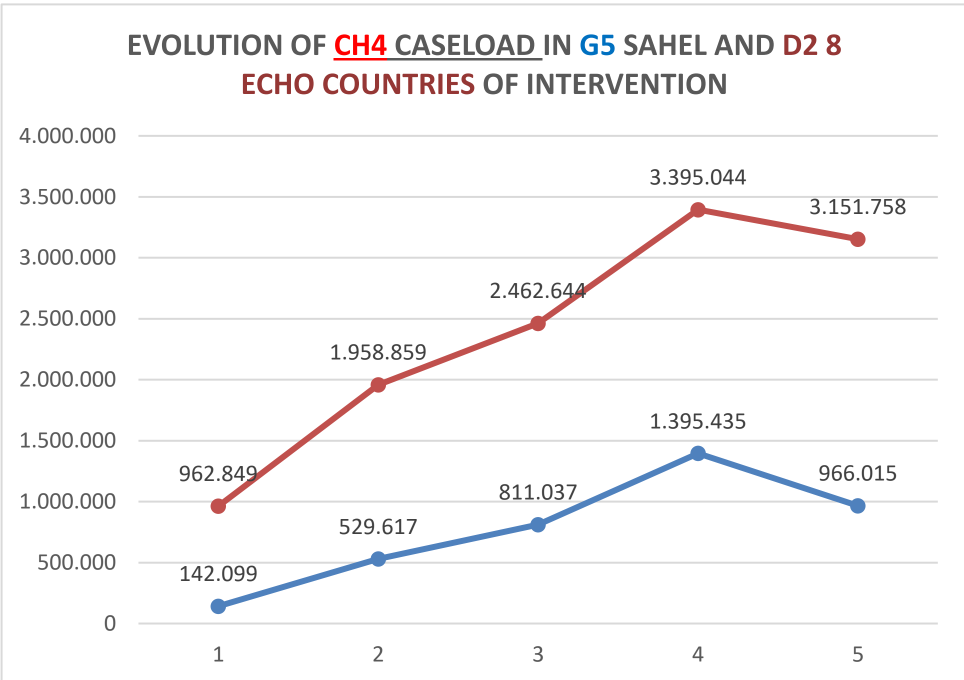
1.3. Food crisis in the Sahel

The Sahel region[3], one of the poorest and most fragile regions in the world, is affected by a combination of protracted and recurrent major humanitarian crises with constantly increasing food insecurity, particularly since 2017-2018. The intensification and widening of conflicts cause further forced displacements (nearly 8.8 million at the end of 2022, and now over 9 million) who are mostly dependent on humanitarian aid for all their basic needs, in particular for food. Needs have become structural for former displaced persons who lost their livelihood. Other shocks (drought, flooding, economic shocks, epidemiological, political) are superimposing to the conflict as main cause of food insecurity.

[3] In this report we consider under Sahel: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, where ECHO has active portfolio of actions

In March 2023 the latest round of IPC/CH analysis showed a 11% increase of the number of people in acute food insecurity (42.5 million of people in IPC/CH phases 3 and above, in the countries covered by the RPCA[4]), compared to March 2022. Of particular concern are the projected increases in the highest IPC/CH phases: 103% increase in IPC/CH phase 4 by December 2022, and 88% increase of IPC/CH phase 5 for the 2023 lean season. Such increases are even more striking if put in a longer perspective: in the Sahel and Lake Chad countries, the number of people in food crisis has increased by 263% compared to the 2015-2020 average.





Source: ECHO

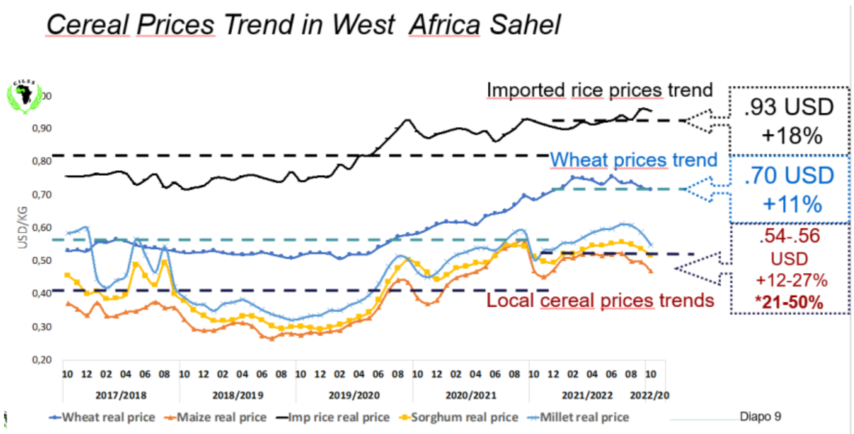
Conflicts are accompanied by an increase in violence against civilians, both by non-state armed groups (NSAG) and associated banditry, and sometimes by the army (and private suppletives in Mali) during their operations. Humanitarian actors are also increasingly targeted by these NSAG, particularly in Nigeria, and access to areas of particularly acute food insecurity is increasingly limited both by insecurity and by national authorities (Nigeria, Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali). They are also accompanied by loss of agro-pastoral production and other means of subsistence, closure of markets, schools and health centers and communication networks.

[4] https://www.food-security.net/

Conflict[5], insecurity, and forced displacement are the main drivers of acute food insecurity and other important humanitarian needs in the region. These are affecting mostly the central Sahel (Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger) and the Lake Chad basin, and have aggravated in the last years, especially since 2019.

This conflict situation builds on a backdrop of poverty, poor access to basic services, chronic and acute structural malnutrition, as well as the recurrence of more extreme climatic shocks (droughts and floods) due to climate change. Indeed, Chad and Niger are among the ten countries most vulnerable to climate change worldwide, and Mauritania has suffered four consecutive years of drought. The region was also severely affected by the ripple effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the global economy and trade. 2022 was marked by major floods in the sub-region (particularly in Nigeria, Chad, Niger and CAR), the strongest recorded for more than a decade in many countries (18 countries affected, 7 million people affected, including 2.7 million displaced people in the countries covered by ECHO). For comparison, in 2020, there were 16 countries and 2.4 million people affected by floods, and less than 120,000 displaced people.

Sahelian countries also count among the most affected by the current cost-of-living crisis. This concerns notably food prices, which are 80% higher than in 2021. In conflict areas, especially Burkina Faso, our field partners report shortages of staple foods in several markets and price increases of around 150%.



[5] See also: https://acleddata.com/africa/regional-overview/.

2. Geographical focus

This section compiles intelligence about the main food crises from the DG ECHO field network and geographical units. For each country, highlights are provided regarding the status and evolution of food insecurity, the main underlying factors, and the main interventions of DG ECHO and other actors. Finally, some ideas for action are put forth, including opportunities for a reinforced HDP nexus.

Among these, increasing humanitarian funding and better targeting is suggested for most countries. Many opportunities for nexus are identified, including coordination with agricultural, livelihood and resilience activities; links with social protection schemes; etc.

Other recurrent recommendations relate to:

- Improving the efficiency of aid through, e.g. rapid or anticipatory action approaches, or through a wider use of cash transfers.
- Improving data and information systems and analyses (more integrated/common analyses).
- Improving humanitarian access to people in need.
- Reinforcing advocacy on a variety of issues (increased funding, respect of IHL, etc).

Examples of these are:

- In Burkina Faso, increase efforts and advocacy for more efficient emergency and post-emergency assistance, in a nexus perspective.
- In Mali, continue to play a leading role in coordination and advocacy for the respect of IHL, principled aid delivery and increased assistance.
- In Nigeria, improve the prioritisation of assistance and vulnerability assessment, ensuring greater coverage for the most vulnerable groups.
- In Madagascar, support shock-responsive mechanisms, resilience building and capacity strengthening.
- In Lebanon, advocate for an inclusive and needs-based social protection framework that allows the poorest households to access services.
- In Haiti, monitor markets and adapt ECHO cash interventions, taking into account the evolution of the currency exchange rate and the cost of living.
- In Afghanistan, secure physical and humanitarian access to all population in need without discrimination.
- In Yemen, develop specific strategies to operate in a context of high inflation and depreciation (e.g., flexible programming, market monitoring and contingency planning).

More details are provided in the country fiches below.

NOTE: To describe the food insecurity status, these fiches use the Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) scale, which is the most broadly used framework. This scale classifies food insecurity in five levels (see below). Expressions like “IPC/CH 3+” are frequently used, meaning “IPC/CH phase 3 and higher”.

In West African countries, IPC/CH can be referred to as CH (Cadre Harmonisé). CH is an analogous system, considered fully compatible with IPC. Hence, CH and IPC/CH phases can be considered equivalent and are often referred to as the IPC/CH framework.

Qualifying Levels of Acute Food Insecurity Using the Reference Table for Area Classification

Mild acute food insecurity → *High acute food insecurity* → *Critical acute food insecurity* →

Phase name and description	Phase 1 None/Minimal	Phase 2 Stressed	Phase 3 Crisis	Phase 4 Emergency	Phase 5 Catastrophe/ Famine
	Households are able to meet essential food and non-food needs without engaging in atypical and unsustainable strategies to access food and income.	Households have minimally adequate food consumption but are unable to afford some essential non-food expenditures without engaging in stress-coping strategies.	Households either: • Have food consumption gaps that are reflected by high or above-usual acute malnutrition; or • Are marginally able to meet minimum food needs but only by depleting essential livelihood assets or through crisis-coping strategies.	Households either: • Have large food consumption gaps which are reflected in very high acute malnutrition and excess mortality; or • Are able to mitigate large food consumption gaps but only by employing emergency livelihood strategies and asset liquidation.	Households have an extreme lack of food and/ or other basic needs even after full employment of coping strategies. Starvation, death, destitution and extremely critical acute malnutrition levels are evident. (For Famine Classification, area needs to have extreme critical levels of acute malnutrition and mortality.)
Priority response objectives	Action required to build resilience and for disaster risk reduction	Action required for disaster risk reduction and to protect livelihoods	**Urgent action required to:** Protect livelihoods and reduce food consumption gaps	Save lives and livelihoods	Revert/prevent widespread death and total collapse of livelihoods

Source : IPC

- ## West and Central Africa

Burkina Faso

Situation and evolution

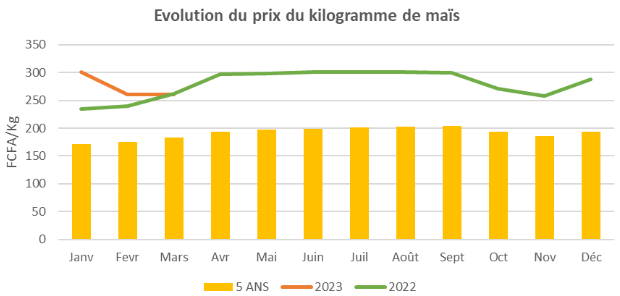
Food security continues to deteriorate in insecure areas in Burkina Faso despite a good agro-pastoral season and an increase of production compared to 2022 and the last 5-year average of cereals, tubers and leguminous, cash crops and livestock fodder. The cereal balance is 98% better than 2022, but remains negative at 72 500 T, which will have to be offset by imports. These trends should be put into perspective in conflict zones, given the difficulties of access to agricultural fields.

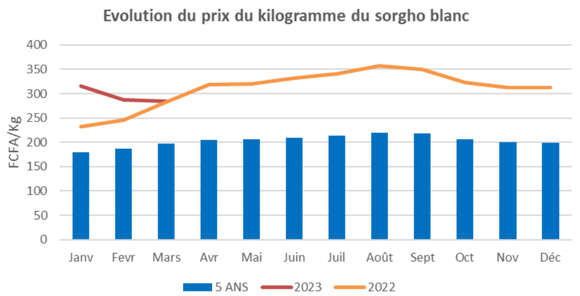
In the March 2023 IPC/CH exercise, 2.2 million people were found to be in IPC/CH phase 3 and above. The projections for the 2023 lean season show a slight improvement (3.35 million people) compared to 2022, but this remains very high (+66%) compared to the average of the last 5 years, with a deteriorating situation in the areas of insecurity and conflict, particularly regarding the most acute phases.

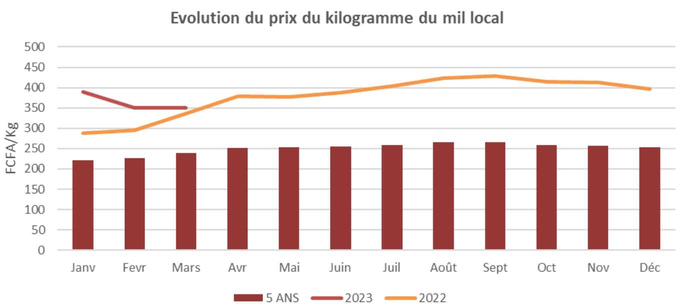
We note a very strong increase in the number of people in IPC/CH phase 4 (+30% to over 140% or even 13 times more than in 2022 in some East provinces), with the appearance of 200 000 new people in IPC/CH phase 4 in 6 provinces (which had zero cases in 2022), and above all nearly 43 000 people in IPC/CH phase 5. The number of people in CH5 has multiplied by 21 since November 2021, when the first cases appeared for the first time since analyses are conducted. The three most insecure areas (Sahel, Centre Nord and East) together represent 1.4 million of population in IPC/CH phase 3 and above (about half of the national caseload), 66% of phase 4, 100% of phase 5 and more than 60% of total IDPs.

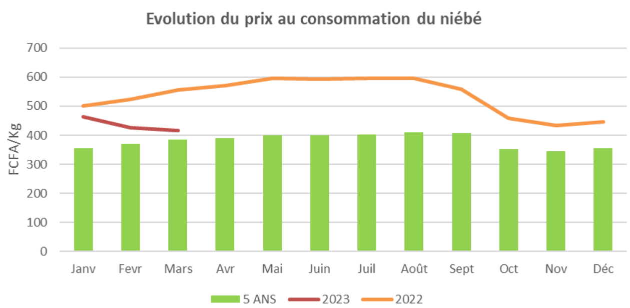
The closure or reduced functionality of health centres affects more than 2.4 million people. The inflationary situation (one of highest in West Africa) continues to worsen, despite the start of the harvest period (usually synonymous with lower food prices). National average prices are still abnormally high compared to last year (+8% for cowpea to +36% for sorghum) and the average of the last 5 years (+31% for niébé to 78% for maize and sorghum). These averages hide even larger increases in conflict zones, e.g., +136% for cowpea and + 336% in Soum province. Price levels and increases are higher than in Mali and Niger.

Prices of key staple products

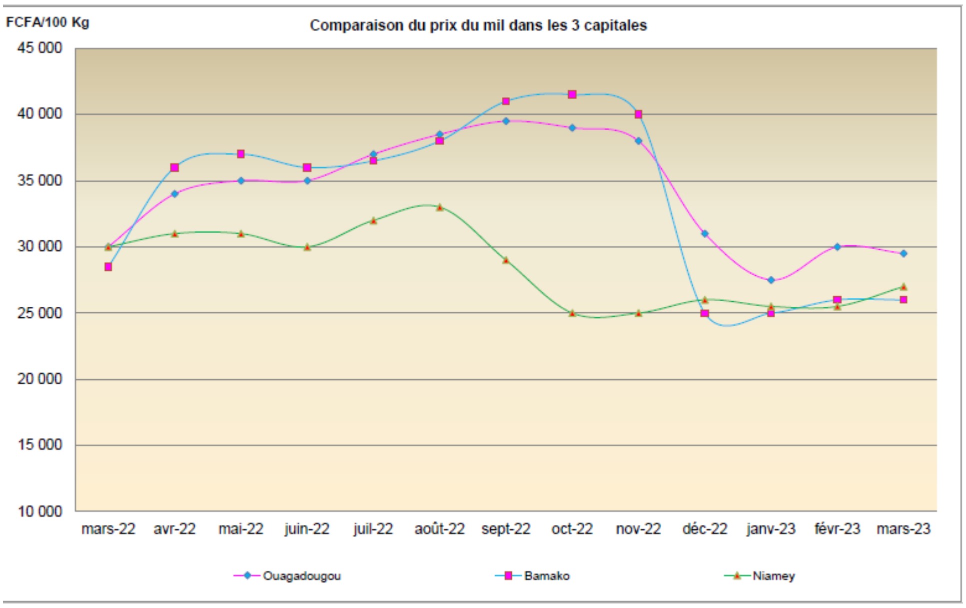








Sources Pregec, March 2023, Dec. 2022



Millet Price in 3 capitals (Feb. 2023, Afrique Verte)

Conflict intensified in recent months, with an increase in towns and populations under blockade and without food (Djibo, Solan, etc.) due to both non-state armed groups' pressure and further restrictions from the Government. At least 800 000 people reside in 25 blockaded municipalities. Increasingly, emergency assistance must be provided by expensive helicopter operations in a context of limited resources and access.

The ban on cash assistance, extended by the government to two other areas, is now affecting Sahel, North Centre and East; an extension to the whole territory is under discussion. The government also made attempts to place WFP airborne operations (suspected of feeding the terrorists) under the army's control. The state of siege and emergency was declared on 30 March 2023, in 8 regions out of 13 (21 provinces), with restrictions on civil rights, to "fight terrorism". 40% of the territory is reportedly not under government control.

The coverage of the rapid response to displaced people is working properly and the funding gaps were avoided thanks to a top-up in December 2022, which should cover the first 3 to 4 months of 2023, depending on the extent of the displacements. An end-of-year top-up was also allocated to WFP to frontload part of the response to the next lean season. In 2023 the initial HIP is funded with EUR 25.5 million, soon topped-up with EUR 4.3 million from the Solidarity and Emergency Aid Reserve. This level is still below 2022 (EUR 58 million), with prospects of a further deterioration of the humanitarian and security situations in 2023.

Drivers

The high prices of basic food items, the intensification of conflict and insecurity with targeting of civilians, food and markets blockage by non-state armed groups using starvation as a weapon of war, the lack of humanitarian access, and the high numbers of internally displaced people (around 2 million people) are the main drivers of the food and nutritional crisis, aggravated by political instability.

Other factors include the rise in national, sub-regional and international food prices (cf. FAO Food Price Index) since 2021. The price of hydrocarbons and transport have also increased, and more than doubled in blockaded areas. The war in Ukraine has exacerbated inflation and speculation. The high insecurity on the roads and destruction of infrastructure also led to a very strong negative impact on the markets and access to beneficiaries.

Ongoing interventions

ECHO interventions

- Over EUR 31.2 million are mobilised in the 2023 HIP to support a multi-sectoral humanitarian response. In addition, EUR 3 million are mobilised under the Enhanced Humanitarian Response Capacity to extend an air bridge operation.
- Food assistance, health and nutrition and protection are priority sectors. DG ECHO provides assistance mainly through cash and in-kind deliveries.
- The EU is a leading actor in diplomacy and coordinated humanitarian advocacy (Global Network Against Food Crises, the OECD and the Club du Sahel, Food Crisis Prevention Network bi-annual meeting), where the food insecurity crisis and related drivers were emphasised along with the underfunded response.
- Commitment of the Country Office with ECOWAS, AfDB and IMF as interlocutors with potential leverage in terms of political dialogue and Humanitarian Diplomacy in connection with the constraints of land access, IHL and civil-military coordination.

Other actors' main interventions

- EU delegation: FPI, PDU and Pasanad's (closing) programs
- USAID/BHA: USD 110 million including a USD 40 million top-up for food assistance in June-July 2022, plus support for WFP air operations.
- World Bank support to WFP and Ministry for Humanitarian Action with USD 388 million.
- GBP 33 million for 35 months from the FCDO/UK Sahel Regional Fund, starting in 2023.

Needs and opportunities

- The triple crisis affecting Burkina Faso (conflict, food insecurity, political instability) requires scaling up the response to essential basic needs including minimum dietary requirements of vulnerable displaced and hosts communities, despite the operational constraints.
- Underfunded crisis: Additional short and long-term financial support is required.
- Improve prioritisation of assistance ensuring greater coverage for the most vulnerable groups including new Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) and refugees, but also general populations in landlocked areas.
- Increase the efforts and advocacy of the EU and other partners for more efficient emergency and post-emergency assistance of productive sectors and infrastructure in rural areas, in a nexus perspective.
- Operationalise the HDP nexus on EUR 150 million budget support reprogramming for resilience and the early recovery of IDP. Burkina Faso has been selected as one of the field research case studies for the study on operational recommendations for further putting into practice the HDP Nexus approach in Food Security in African partner countries.

Central African Republic (CAR)

Situation and evolution

There are some 483,074 IDPs recorded in the CAR, the vast majority (75%) staying with hosting families/relatives. Returnees from inside and outside the country are on the rise, bringing with them significant needs in terms of food insecurity and livelihoods support.

3 million people are estimated in IPC phase 3+over the period April 2023 to August 2023 (September 2022 IPC), which represents 49% of the total population analysed. This represents an increase compared to 2022 (2.2 million, representing 45% of the population analysed). 33 sub-prefectures and around 800 000 people are classified in IPC phase 4 (Emergency) representing 13% of the population analysed, a stable situation compared to 2022.

The country continues to struggle with a protracted security crisis, which continues to affect both the national economy, the means of subsistence of the populations (arable land, livestock, etc.) and market supplies. This means that the country relies primarily on imported foods. As an annual average, the prices of the main basic cereals such as imported rice, maize and sorghum rose by 19%, 21% and 7% respectively between December 2021 and December 2022. Compared to the five-year average, this price increase stands at 46% for imported rice and 8% for maize; while sorghum prices fell by 19%. Other foods such as groundnuts, cassava, and cowpeas, which are strongly present in the food consumption habits of the populations, also recorded price increases of 3%, 1% and 34% respectively. Compared to the average of the last five years, prices have increased by 37% for groundnuts, 11% cowpeas and 6% cassava. Almost all of the country's markets are in crisis, with average annual increases in the price of imported rice ranging between 30 and 70%. In the Vakaga region, especially in the Birao market, the price of rice rose from 1000 to 2500 XOF/kg between January and November 2022, i.e. an increase of 150%, before dropping by 40% between November and December 2022 (the price went from 2500 to 1500 XOF/kg). Compared to the first three quarters of the year, the price of rice in Birao is up by 75%. In addition, in December 2022, in almost all markets, the prices of imported rice were down compared to November.

Drivers

Protracted crisis and logistical challenges are major obstacles to the production and commercialisation / distribution of food.

Recurrent violence and resulting displacements continue to reduce the resilience and livelihood opportunities of the communities affected by these fluid conflict dynamics. These long-term drivers are now being exacerbated by the ripple effects of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and of the reduction or suspension of development aid, especially budget support, owing to the political situation in CAR (concerns over the regime’s reliance for security on Russia’s private military contractor Wagner).

Ongoing interventions

ECHO interventions

- EUR 20.5 million were allocated under the HIP 2023, topped-up with EUR 3 million (SEAR) and EUR 500.000 (Log) Total EUR 24 million.

Other actors’ main interventions

- In CAR, USAID/BHA is expected to apply important budget cuts that might have a significant impact on the funding of the food security sector.
- The 2023 HRP for the food security sector in CAR is requesting USD 220 million

Needs and opportunities

- Improve prioritisation of assistance ensuring greater coverage for the most vulnerable groups for emergency assistance in the food sector in CAR.
- Ensure immediate support during the crop season to ensure a better agricultural production level and a rapid recovery.

- Support nexus initiatives, through joint financing and strong coordination including with the EU Delegation on the possible reprogramming of unspent budget support to redirect it to resilience and food security, especially to address recovery needs of returnees.

Chad

Situation and evolution

Over 1 million people are currently in IPC/CH phase 3 and above in Chad during the pastoral lean season (March to May), even if a very good rainy season has been recorded. Regarding the 2023 lean season projection update, needs have estimated to increase compared to the initial projection done in November 2022, going from an initial estimate of 1.5 million people in IPC/CH phase 3 and above to a final update of 1.86 million people. This increase was expected considering that the first projection of November under-estimated the impact of the unprecedented flooding of 2022. The situation remains therefore worrisome with more than 11% of the population requiring emergency food assistance from June to August 2023.

The December 2022 National SMART survey show a Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) prevalence of 8.6%, including 1.5% of Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM). It decreased by 2.3 points compared to that observed in 2021, which was at 10.9%. However, GAM prevalence is above the WHO emergency threshold (15%) in the provinces of Wadi Fira (17.7%), Borkou (16.2%), and East Ennedi (15.7%). As for SAM, the provinces most affected are Bahr El Gazel (2.5%), Wadi Fira (2.5%), Sila (2.3%) and Salamat (2.2%).

In the Sahel belt region, food demand outweighs supply and is focused on own consumption. Food supply comes mainly from the Southern parts of the country, also in production deficit this year, which has a strong impact on price trends.

UNHCR counted about 1 million people forcibly displaced in Chad, including close to 600 000 refugees from Sudan, CAR, Nigeria, and Cameroon. The situation in the Lake Chad region is characterised by a significant number of internally displaced people, with close to 400 000 people in total. Insecurity is not decreasing. In March 2023, several acts of violence from the non-state armed groups or inter-community conflicts have prompted nearly 8 000 new people to flee their villages in the Lake region.

Moreover, the unprecedented floods of the 2022 rainy season affected more than 1.4 million people in 18 provinces out of 23, including 250 000 people affected in the capital city N'Djamena. It is estimated that 79 000 homes have been destroyed, along with 465 000 hectares of land and 19 400 heads of cattle. The Chadian government has put a contingency plan in place and is working with humanitarian actors to meet the needs of flood-affected populations. In addition to the multiple spontaneous relocation sites that have cropped up in N'Djamena and surrounding areas, three official camps have been set up in and around the capital.

Drivers

Persistent violence in Chad and in bordering countries continues to cause displacements. According to the latest Displacement Tracking Matrix and UNHCR data, Chad registers some 575 000 refugees (from Sudan, CAR, Cameroon, Nigeria), 381 289 IDPs, and 101 551 returnees. Recent incidents in Sudan risk increasing the number of refugees, since the start of the conflict approximately 10 000 to 20 000 people have been displaced in villages along the Chadian borders. A contingency plan has been prepared by HCR and CNARR for a potential influx of 100 000 refugees over a period of less than 3 months. The lack of rain in 2021, followed by unprecedented floodings in 2022, has significantly affected the agricultural and fodder production, aggravating the already critical food situation of the most vulnerable and the conflict-affected households. The most common coping strategies are the sale of livestock, the sale of productive and non-productive assets, and the migration of one or more household members. The 2022 rainy season has recorded historical above-average rainfalls, resulting in floods that affected 1.4 million people. This has affected the food security situation of thousands of vulnerable households with the destruction of their livelihoods. The agricultural production was, however, compensated thanks to the agricultural counter-season sorghum production along with gardening production. The final cereals production for the 2022-2023 campaign is estimated to be 6.8% higher than in 21/22, and 1.2% lower than the five-year average.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine affects basic food prices and generates a lack of access to agricultural inputs for the rural communities. It has limited the production capacities in 2022 and therefore the ability of vulnerable households to recover from this crisis.

Ongoing interventions

ECHO interventions

- EUR 26.5 million initially allocated in 2023, already topped up with EUR 4 million from the SEAR. The main sectors covered are food assistance, health and nutrition, and Rapid Response Mechanism. Almost half of the RRM is allocated to food assistance.
- DG ECHO is supporting emergency food security response to forced displacement (RRM), as well as lean season response. A support is also provided to the Food Security Cluster at national and Lac Province level. DG ECHO under the HIP 2023 is also supporting a Disaster Preparedness programme to support the national early warning system in detecting, anticipating, and mitigating food crisis impact.
- ECHO has activated both DREF and ALERT (Activation Small Scale Tool) emergency response mechanisms to provide additional assistance to the flood-affected population.

Other actors' main interventions

- FAO and WFP benefit from a EUR 44 million program (P2RSA) by DG INTPA in support of food security and nutrition (for example through the local production of fortified flours), social protection, as well as local governance and cohesion.
- USAID/BHA is the other main donor to fund emergency food assistance. In 2023, the USAID/BHA budget is expected to drop significantly, including for the food security sector.

Needs and opportunities

- Continue to improve prioritisation of assistance, ensuring greater coverage for the most vulnerable groups.
- Also, as part of the nexus approach, advocate for immediate support to crop production to ensure a better agricultural production level and a rapid recovery, in complementarity with emergency food assistance.
- Chad is one of the selected case study countries for the joint EU study on “Strengthening the operationalisation of the HDP Nexus in the area of food security by the EU"

Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

Situation and evolution

26.4 million people in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) are estimated to be acutely food insecure. This includes 3.8 million people at emergency level (IPC/CH phase 4). Even if the number of people classified as food insecure has decreased compared to the last analysis, the situation remains worrying, and the DRC still tops the ranking of countries with the largest number of people affected.

The humanitarian community warns that the food security situation continues to rapidly deteriorate in the North Kivu province of Eastern DRC (but also in other Eastern provinces), after military conflict between non-state armed actor “M23” and the national armed forces started again in 2022. Families fleeing the conflict live with host families or in makeshift shelters and face multiple needs, including food, healthcare, WASH, and shelter. In its report of 16 March 2023, WFP estimates that 1.1 million people need food assistance in the provinces of North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri. WFP needs USD 127.4 million for food assistance in those 3 provinces between March and June 2023.

Furthermore, FEWS NET’s market analysis conducted in January 2023 showed that prices of major local food products follow their seasonal trends but remain above their five-year averages. It should be noted that the combined effects of the devaluation of the local currency and the general increase in world food and fuel prices are keeping staple food prices well above average.

Drivers

Agricultural productivity is low in the DRC. Structural poverty and under-development, poor infrastructure and poor governance that limit agricultural and economic activities in rural areas, livestock and agricultural pests, forced displacement due to conflict, weather conditions and climate change, as well as recurrent epidemics, contribute to the alarming food insecurity.

In the past six months, several factors have seriously impacted the food security issues/responses, notably the reduction of humanitarian space and access constraints due to the control of the M23 zone in Rutshuru, and the increase in insecurity in Ituri areas where the FARDC has left a security vacuum to support the M23 crisis. This is leading people to find alternative supply roads to avoid insecurity (which is more costly than before).

Armed and inter-community conflicts affect mainly 5 of the 26 provinces of the DRC. As of December 31, 2022, 5.77 million people were internally displaced (IDP) and over 85% of displacement is conflict-driven. This figure does not consider the newly displaced persons in the first quarter of 2023.

Insecurity does not allow farmers to tilt their land, access markets, etc. IDPs depend on host populations and humanitarian aid, including food assistance.

The DRC is severely under-developed, with all related consequences, including the absence or poor conditions of roads, which keeps many rural communities isolated, limiting their access to markets and essential social services. The DRC's human capital index stands at 0.37 – meaning a Congolese child born today can only hope to achieve 37% of his/her potential. The rate of stunting in the DRC is one of the highest in sub-Saharan Africa, and malnutrition is the underlying cause of almost half of the deaths of children under five.

Most of the Congolese population – 60 million people – live on less than USD 1 a day, according to the World Bank. Seven out of ten Congolese live in rural areas, mostly subsistence farmers in conditions of precariousness and poverty. Increases in food prices have further reduced the purchasing power of the Congolese population.

Ongoing interventions

ECHO interventions

- DG ECHO received EUR 81 million early 2023, of which EUR 47.2 million from the HIP allocation and EUR 33.8 million from the SEAR. This budget represents a 4% contribution to the total requested HRP 2023 budget. EUR 8,4 million are being directly allocated to the food security and nutrition sectors to support cash and food distribution for IDPs in acute emergency.

Other actors

- At the moment, the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP 2023) is funded up to 10,2% and the US Government remains the main donor, providing over USD 140 million, representing 60.3 % of all reported humanitarian funding in the country in 2023. Its focus is mainly on food security and nutrition. The EU provides 12,6%, Germany 9,3%, Japan 5%, CERF, 4% (FTS April 2023).
- WFP remains the main food security organisation in the DRC. In 2023, their Needs-Based Plan (2021-2024) is USD 2 337 665 977. As of March 2023, 43,31% of their total budget is funded by the major donors in the DRC: USA - USD 470 million (20,1%), The European Union - USD 47,6 million (2%), Germany - USD 85 million (3,6%), Canada - USD 47 million (2%), UK - USD 45 million (1,9%), UN CERF-USD 34,6 million (1,5%), Sweden - USD 29 million (1,2%), Japan - USD 22,7 million (1%)[6].

Needs and opportunities

- The 2023 Humanitarian Response Plan for the DRC requires USD 2,26 billion. According to OCHA's Financial Tracking Service (FTS), 10.2% is funded as of March 20, 2023. As of today, the US Government remains the main donor, providing over USD 140 million, representing 60.3 % of all reported humanitarian funding in the Country in 2023. Its focus is mainly on food security and nutrition.
- In DRC, the need to focus on nexus strategies is reflected for the food security sector through the targeting of people in IPC/CH phase 3 in addition to all people in IPC/CH phase 4. The sector's strategy is based on three pillars:
    - Emergency assistance through food distributions and cash transfers to save the lives of people in extreme vulnerability in IPC/CH phase 4.
    - Emergency assistance combined with emergency agricultural and livelihoods recovery actions for livelihoods in IPC/CH phase 3.
    - Develop social safety nets funded by non-humanitarian resources to build resilience and reduce the proportion of people in humanitarian need. As of today, the World Bank is supporting this type of approach mainly in urban settings.

Mali

Situation and evolution

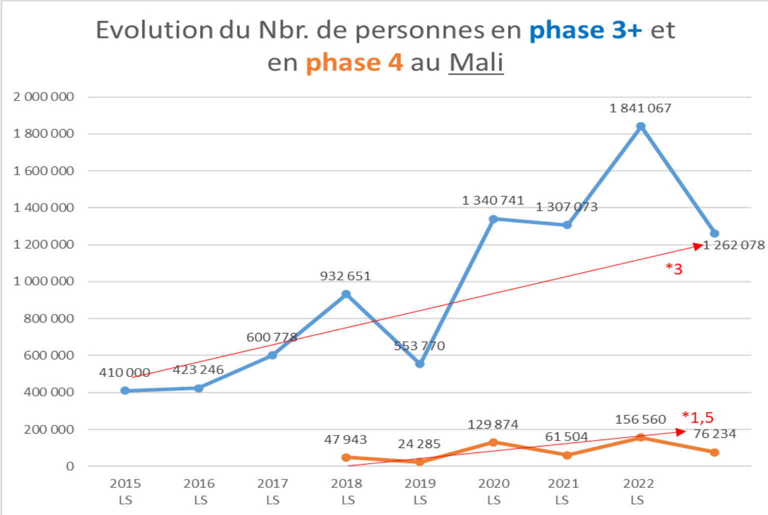
The food security situation shows improvements according to the latest IPC/CH analysis issued in March 2023. This seems to contradict the current socio-economic and security situation of the country, which is similar if not more severe than that of Burkina Faso. 760 000 people are currently in IPC/CH phase 3 and above, including around 40 000 in phase 4. Such improvements need to be nuanced, in view of the abnormally high prices, insecurity, and absence of basic services (especially in the Centre and North of the country).

The situation is expected to deteriorate; for the lean season, about 1.3 million people are expected to be in IPC/CH phases 3 and above (+6% versus 2018-2022 average), 76 000 people in phase 4, and 2 500 in phase 5 in Ménaka, for the first time since IPC/CH analyses are conducted. The food insecurity situation has deteriorated sharply in the regions of Sikasso, Gao, Ménaka, and Bamako.

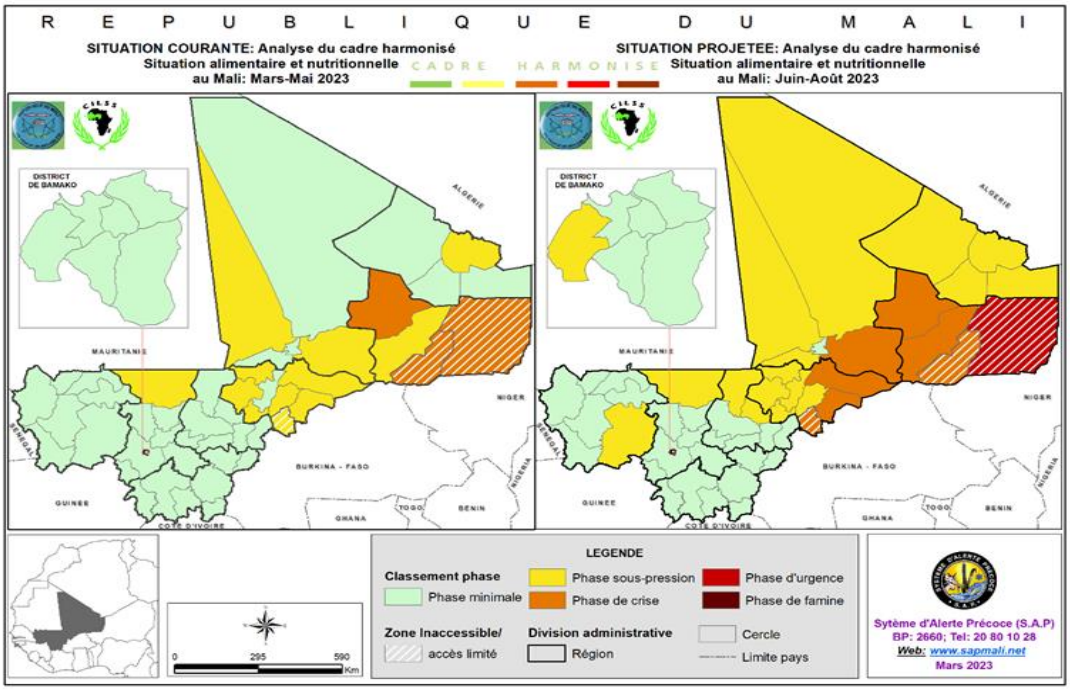
According to the 2023 HRP, 8.8 million people will need emergency humanitarian assistance in Mali (+16% compared to 7.5 million in 2022); partners plan to be able to assist

[6] WFP DRC RESOURCE SITUATION as of 20/03/2023

5.7 million people (compared to 5.3 million in 2022) knowing that HRP 2022 was only financed up to 40.4%.



Multiyear evolution of people in IPC/CH phases 3 and 4 during the lean season in Mali (Source: ECHO)



Compared to 2022, the good rainy season translated in a significant production increase of cereals (+14.5% and +3%), tubers (+6 % and +10%), cash crops (+6% and +1%) and livestock fodder. However, production of cereals per inhabitant is still –5% versus the last five years average. These figures do not take into account attacks against production and forced taxes in conflict zones. Despite the good to very good agro-pastoral season, and the fall in the prices of several basic food products, the average prices remain much higher than in 2022 and the last 5-year average. In January 2023, millet and sorghum are respectively 64% and 49% more expensive than in 2022 and the last 5-year average (+34% and +22%). The increase in the value of the Minimum Expenditure Basket varies from +17% (national average) to +33% (insecure and conflict areas). Increased cost of fuel is impacting food prices and the cost of assistance.

The security and humanitarian situation have particularly worsened in the North and Centre of the country, while insecurity keeps spreading further South, notably Sikasso. Threats and violence against civilian populations are increasing, leading to numerous forced displacements and growing protection incidents. The most updated IDP figure of 412 000 individuals (December 2022) is higher than in 2012. The situation is very worrying in Gao/Menaka areas with continuous arrivals from Ansongo, Talataye, Tessit and Ménaka into urban centres – only in Ménaka, there are 54 000 IDPs (new arrivals). Children represent 62% of the internally displaced population.

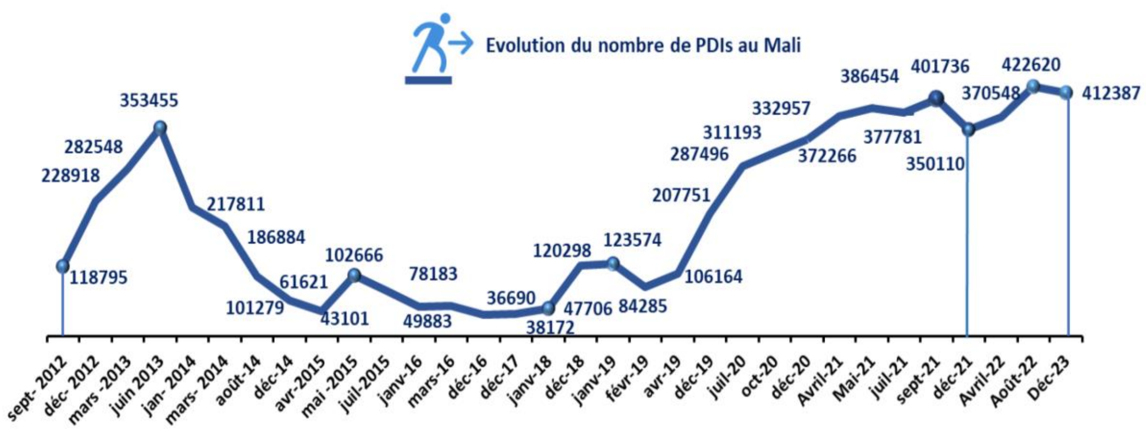
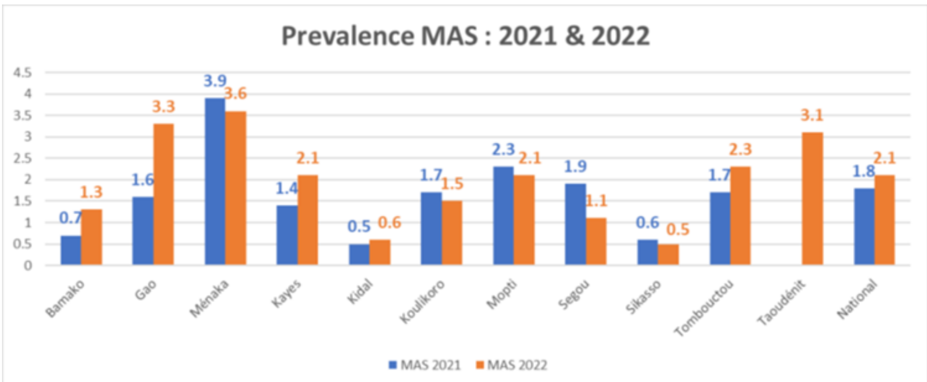


Figure 1- Displacement trends (source : Displacement Tracking Matrix Mali (IOM, Direction Nationale du Développement Social – DNDS), December 2022

Constraints on humanitarian access and people's access to their livelihoods and basic services are increasing. Attacks and threats against medical staff, health centres, as well as predation on medical equipment and drugs are increasing.

A significant increase in the prevalence of severe acute malnutrition has been reported in 2022 in many regions, notably those in conflict (Gao, Timbuktu, Taoudenit), compared to 2021, with a national average above the emergency threshold.



Source: Food Security Cluster, October 2022

Drivers

Worsening conflict, violence against civilians, and extension of conflict-affected areas are the main drivers of food insecurity. This translates into limited access to markets for populations and providers, high and increasing insecurity, irregular controls on the main commercial roads, destruction of land, crops and livelihoods by armed actors, restriction of access to land, etc.

The abnormally high prices of basic food at national, sub-regional and international levels (cf. FAO Index) since the end of 2021 had a significant impact. General inflation in 2022 was estimated at 7% by the World Bank.

The country is very dependent on imports (14% for cereals, 25% for fuel, 25% of fertilisers), and is severely affected by the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Ongoing interventions

ECHO interventions

- EUR 31 million allocated in 2023, including EUR 5 million contribution from the Solidarity and Emergency Aid Reserve. The main sectors remain Rapid Multi-sectoral Response, including food assistance to IDPs and host communities, shelter, wash and non-food items; health/nutrition, food assistance, protection and education. DG ECHO increasingly provides aid through cash and vouchers interventions.

Other actors' main interventions

- International partners have largely put their development cooperation with the government on hold, with negative effects on financial assistance for the poorest and most vulnerable populations. The latest cuts in French funding (decree of 29/11/2022) further reduced financial assistance, including for humanitarian actions.
- EU delegation: EUR 62.5 million including PDU[7] programs in rural areas in 2022.
- USAID/BHA: USD 75 million including USD 15-32 million top-up for food assistance in 2022.
- GBP 33 million for 35 months from the FCDO/UK Sahel Regional Fund (starting in 2023).

Needs and opportunities

- Additional short and long-term financial support and scaling up of the response is required for more efficient emergency and post-emergency assistance: functionality of basic services, livelihood and productive support, infrastructure, durable solutions for long-term Internally Displaced Persons, etc.
- Continue to play a leading role in coordination and advocacy for the respect of IHL, principled aid delivery and increased assistance to Mali, and advocate with other services and donors for increased engagement in Mali.
- Opportunities for nexus are limited due to the political crisis and security environment, with the almost total suspension of development cooperation by EU and EU MS.

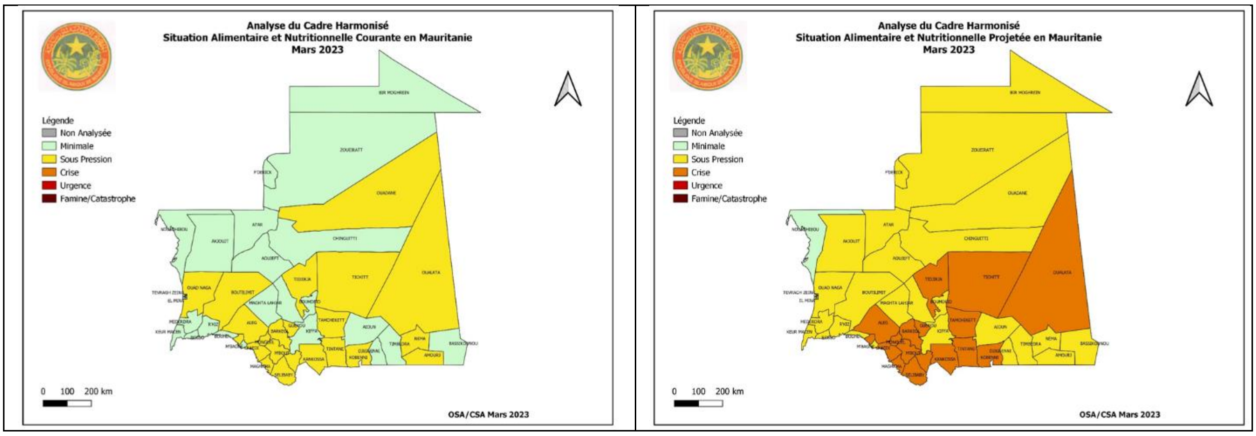
Mauritania

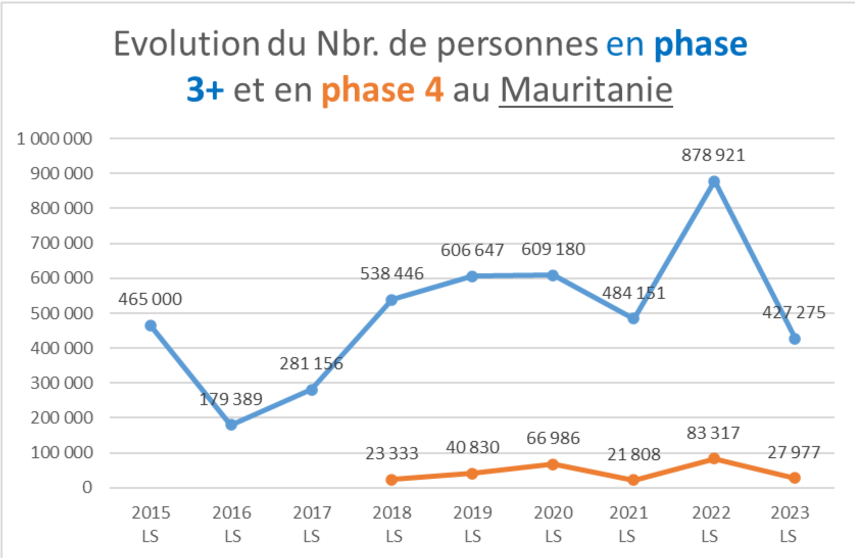
Situation and evolution

The last agricultural and pastoral campaigns yielded an increase of cereal production (+10% versus 2022 and +35% versus last 5 years average, and a net surplus of over 350 000 tonnes) and of livestock fodder.

The latest IPC/CH analysis (October 2022 - March 2023) shows a significant decrease in food insecure people, both actual (272 000 people, -60% versus March 2022) and projected for the next lean season (427 275 people in phase 3 and above, -38% versus 2022 including -66% of people in phase 4).

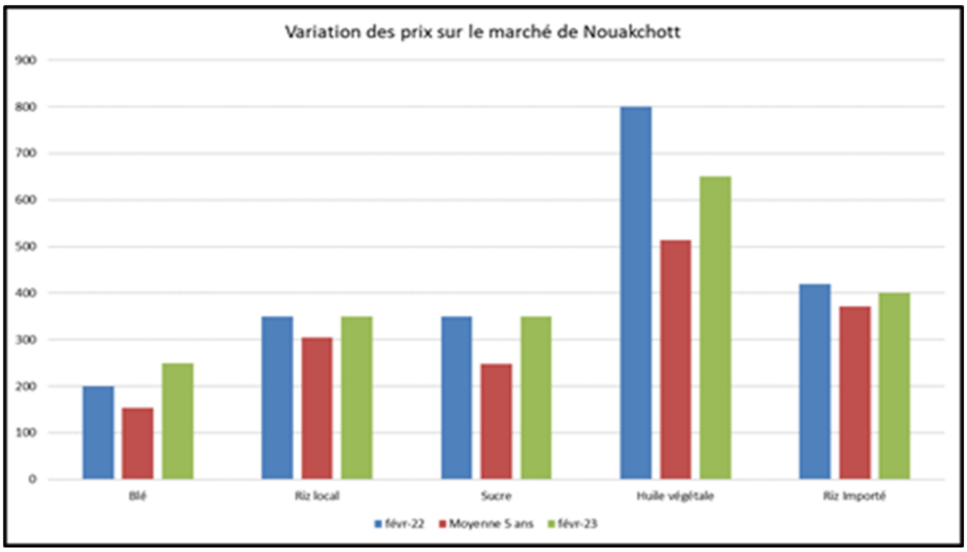
[7] Programme de Développement d'Urgence





Multiyear evolution of people in CH3+ and CH4 in Mauritania during the lean season (*Source*: ECHO)

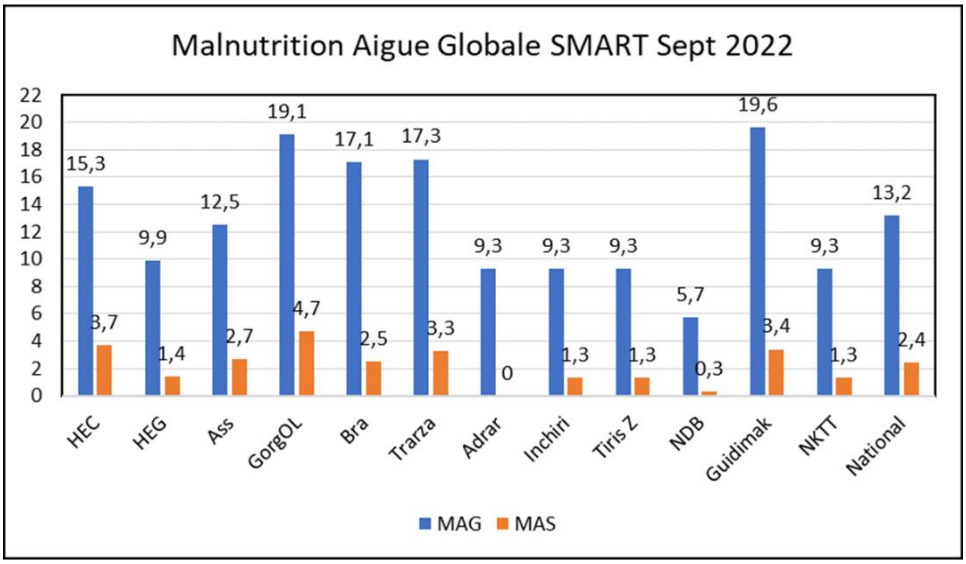
The price of basic food products remains high, especially for imported products, on which Mauritania is highly dependent. Food prices still remain very high compared to 2022 (+11% to +93% depending on the product and the areas), and to the average of the last 5 years (29 to 95 % higher), except for sorghum (-42% vs 2022 and -37% vs last 5 years):



Pregec, March 2023

The food situation of the Malian refugees (about 90 000 people, mainly children) also keeps deteriorating, despite assistance from WFP and from the government. Social protection is intensifying with an increasing amount of regular quarterly transfers that aim to reach the level of assistance granted during the lean season by 2024. AFD is also making a significant contribution to this agenda, including the establishment of the National Food and Nutrition Crisis Response Fund (FNRCAN), as part of the new national device (DCAN).

The poor nutritional situation is also concerning, national average of 13.2% for GAM and 2.4% for SAM. Six Wilayas (Provinces) are in critical situation (MAG >15 and/or SAM >2%).



Source: DG ECHO

Drivers

The persistence of a high level of basic food prices, of poverty and extreme poverty in rural areas, are the key drivers in addition to climatic shocks.

The limited access to food is aggravated by the high dependence of imports with high international food prices: Mauritania has a 70% dependence on food imports (nearly 10% of its GDP), with 50% of its imported wheat originating from Russia and Ukraine.

Mauritania is currently exposed to a high risk of debt distress and therefore has limited fiscal space to manage this situation effectively.

Ongoing interventions

ECHO interventions

- EUR 7 million in 2023: with food assistance, health and nutrition, disaster preparedness, education, logistic support. DG ECHO provides food assistance mainly through cash (100% of food ration through cash and local enriched flour in kind).

- EU is a leading actor on diplomacy and coordinated humanitarian advocacy.

Other actors' main interventions

- EU Delegation rural development programme (Rimrap, Rimdir, Rimfil: EUR 46 million) in the closing phase – Top up of EUR 12 million considered with EDF leftover funds.
- USAID/BHA: USD 9 million, including USD 5 million top up for food assistance in 2022 June-July.

- World Bank: National social safety nets extension including Malian refugees of Mberra.

Needs and opportunities

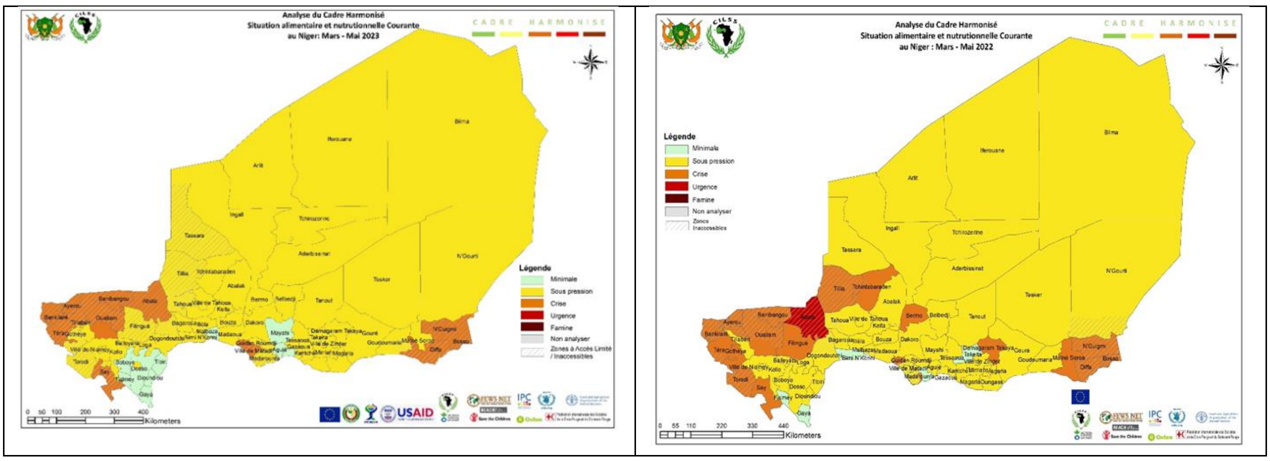
- Sustain coverage of the food needs and ensure better mechanisms to avoid exclusion of the most vulnerable, including refugees.
- Increase long-term financial support and investment to improve food security sustainably.
- Increase in the State budget for the agro-pastoral sector in accordance with the Maputo commitments[8], while guaranteeing better effectiveness and efficiency of public expenditure.
- Continue to ensure a leading role in coordination and advocacy for an increased interest in Mauritania ("forgotten" Sahelian country in West Africa).[9]

Niger

Situation and evolution

The final result of agricultural and pastoral campaigns shows an increase of cereal production (+ 69% versus 2022 and +12% versus last 5 years average, but still 266 000 tons of cereal deficit to be compensated by imports), of main cash crops (+13% to +73% versus 2022 depending on speculation, and +16% to +52% versus last 5 years average) and of livestock fodder. However, some important fodder deficits are recorded in West regions (Niamey –Tillabery - Abala) and around Tahoua[10]. The agro-pastoral season should be put into perspective in conflict zones, given the difficulties to access the fields, the low yields in these zones and the dependence of IDPs on assistance.

The 2023 March IPC/CH analysis shows an improvement of food security versus 2022, which was affected by severe drought and very high agro-pastoral deficits), nevertheless, food insecurity remains high despite the 2022 good agropastoral production: 2.5 million people are currently in IPC/CH phases 3 and above (-7% versus March 2022) including 88 000 persons in IPC/CH phase 4, despite the Government first responses after the November 2022 IPC/CH analyses. For the next lean season, 3.4 million of people are expected to be in phase 3 and above (including 150 000 people in IPC/CH phase 4, or -87% compared to 2022 but +12% compared to the forecast from CH November 2022).

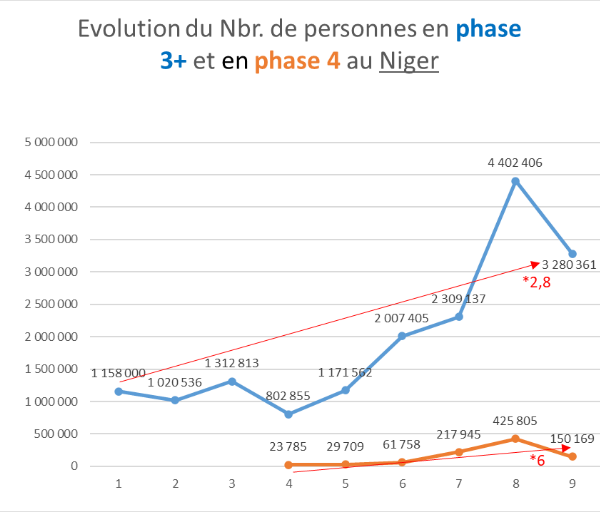


8 Programme détaillé pour le développement de l'agriculture africaine (PDDAA), launched in 2003 in Maputo by Heads of State and Government under the auspices of the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)

9 DG ECHO assistance in Mauritania in 2023 will focus on operationalizing its phasing out

10 https://sigsahel.info/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/ACF-VSF_Bulletin_surveillance_pastorale_Niger_aout-septembre_2022.pdf

Map of food insecurity levels (Pregec, March 2023)

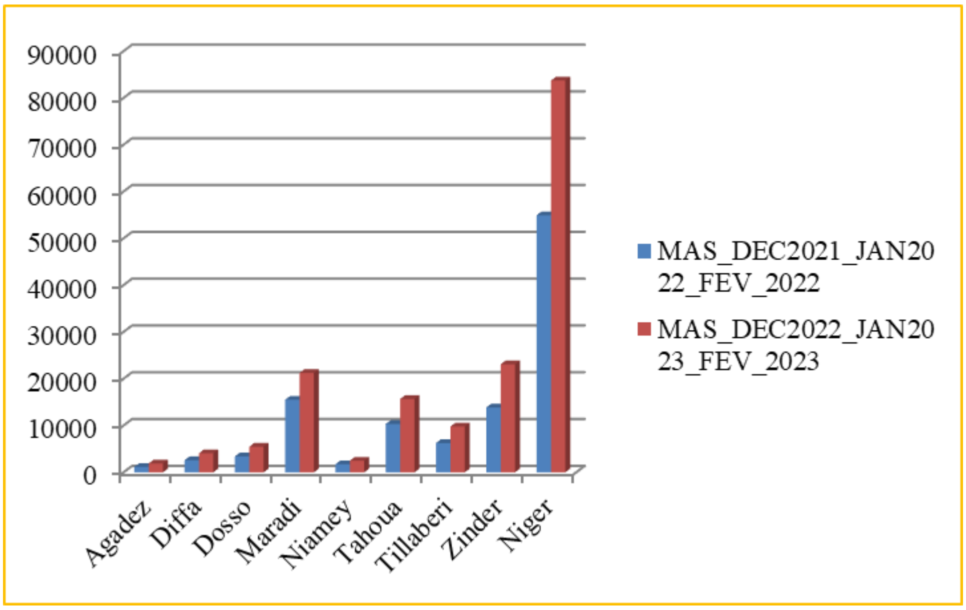


Multiyear evolution of number of people in CH3+ and CH4 in Niger

Source: DG ECHO

The downward trend in food prices was maintained. End of March 2023, local cereal prices (millet, sorghum and maize) were -7 to -11%, but rice prices were +1% compared to 2022. Compared to the last 5 years average prices, local cereals were at +14% to + 27% and rice at +8%. Globally, food prices were lower than in other central Sahelian countries (see sections above).

Acute malnutrition persists with prevalence above the alert threshold and reaching the critical threshold of 16.4% in the department of Dogondoutchi. (SMART 2022). SAM admissions are up sharply during December 2022, January-February 2023 compared to the same period a year ago.



The security situation remains volatile, despite a slight decrease in the number of incidents during the last three months of 2022 compared to the previous period. A severe attack was made mid-February 2023 against the army, in Intagamey, department of Ouallam. In Diffa city, kidnappings by armed individuals were on the rise. The security situation is also in degradation in Tahoua region.

The number of internally displaced persons was estimated at 388 566, mostly in the Diffa and Tillabéry regions.

On 23-14 January 2023, a high-level conference on the Lake Chad crisis was held in Niamey; the Acting Director General of DG ECHO took part.

Drivers

The main direct and indirect drivers are the consequences of the intensification of conflict in neighbouring countries: Mali, Burkina Faso, and Nigeria. In particular, there is a substantial deterioration of security and humanitarian access in the Tillabéry area, and security concerns in Tahoua, North-West Nigeria and Maradi. The crisis is aggravated by the historic deficit of agro-pastoral production in 2021 (−36% compared with the 2020 campaign and the average of the last five years), as well as by the rise of national, sub-regional and international food prices (cf. FAO Index) since 2021. The increase of price of diesel fuel (+24% at the beginning of August) and its shortages are additional negative factors.

Ongoing interventions

ECHO interventions

- EUR 33 million have been released under the 2023 HIP, including EUR 8 million from the Solidarity and Emergency Aid Reserve, to support a multi-sectoral humanitarian response notably by rapid response mechanisms. Food assistance, rapid multi-sectoral response to IDPs, and health are the most important sectors. DG ECHO provides aid mainly through cash and in-kind deliveries.

Other actors' main interventions

- EU delegation: FPI, Programme de Développement d'Urgence (résilience) in rural areas.
- USAID/BHA: USD 25 million top up for food assistance in 2022 June-July.
- Ongoing reallocation of resources from the World Bank and USD 5.3 million from the African Development Bank.
- GBP 33 million for 35 months from the FCDO/UK Sahel Regional Fund (starting in 2023).

Needs and opportunities

- Need for more efficient and scaled-up response to essential basic needs and prioritisation of assistance to vulnerable households.
- Additional short and long-term financial support is required as well as more efficient emergency and post-emergency assistance of food assistance, of livelihood, of productive sectors and infrastructure in rural areas.
- Increase the funding efforts and advocacy of the EU and other partners.
- Accelerate the concrete operationalisation of the nexus and its monitoring and evaluation, for IDPs.

Nigeria

Situation and evolution

Nigeria is part of the 6 countries at the highest alert level, as there are populations facing starvation (Catastrophe, IPC/CH Phase 5) or at risk of deterioration towards catastrophic conditions. These populations are already critically food insecure (Emergency, IPC/CH phase 4) and are facing severe aggravating factors. 17.7 million people are currently in IPC/CH phase 3 and above according to the March 2023 IPC/CH analysis, which represents 9% of the analysed population. Food needs remain very high especially in the Northeast (Borno, Adamawa and Yobe – BAY States) and the North-West, where acute food needs have significantly increased over the years along with acute malnutrition. Needs are projected to increase to nearly 25 million people in IPC/CH Phase 3 and above in the upcoming lean season to reach 13% of the analysed population.

Nearly 6 million children aged 0-59 months in Northwest and Northeast Nigeria are likely suffering and expected to suffer from acute malnutrition. This includes 1.6 million Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) cases and 4.3 million Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) cases. In the Northeast, the burden of acute malnutrition will likely increase by 16% compared to 2022 due to the impact of displacements, flooding, high levels of inequality, food insecurity, very low coverage of preventive interventions, while approximately 2 million children under 5 (including 700 000 severely malnourished) and 180 000 PLW will likely be acutely malnourished in 2023. From January to December, more than 195 000 severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) cases were admitted to the nutrition centre (against 135 000 SAM targeted in HRP 2022).

The Humanitarian Situation Monitoring of November 2022 in the ***inaccessible areas*** of the Borno, Adamawa and Yobe (BAY) states shows concerning food consumption deficits and limited diversity of diets. 44.4% of the households struggle to have sufficient food intake, and nearly 64.8% experienced a crisis or higher levels of food insecurity (IPC/CH phase 3 and above). 44.8% of the households rely on crisis coping strategies to meet their food needs. The levels of acute malnutrition among new arrivals from the inaccessible areas are serious with the overall Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rate at 19.1% and Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) at 6.2%. Overall, both crude and under-five mortality rates (CMR and U5MR) were above the emergency threshold with values of 1.56 deaths/10 000 persons/day for CMR and 3.62 deaths/10 000 under-five/day.

The ongoing local policy to close all IDP camps continues, reducing access to those in need. Through the second wave of camps closure, about 140 000 IDPs were relocated from several IDP camps in Maiduguri Metropolitan Council (M.M.C.), Jere and Konduga Local Government Areas (LGAs) to other locations in Borno State. The Borno State Government-led camp closures and relocation, resettlement, and return has elicited significant concerns regarding IDPs' safety and dignity, and around the guiding principles of voluntariness and informed consent. Dire living conditions and limited access to basic services and assistance have also triggered secondary, or multiple, population movements into congested IDP camps. The uncoordinated resettlement and relocation of IDPs to inaccessible or hard-to-reach areas risks increasing food insecurity and malnutrition.

Drivers

Insecurity linked to ongoing conflict between non-state armed groups (NSAG) and government security forces (Northeast), banditry (Northwest) and intercommunal clashes remain the key drivers of food insecurity. Farmers struggle to access their lands and cultivate their fields, while herders cannot move their livestock freely. Many local government areas remain completely or partially inaccessible for humanitarian assistance, and it is estimated that in 2023 one million people were in areas inaccessible to international humanitarian actors.

Climate change also reduces the resilience of communities and fuels intercommunity violence on the use of natural resources. The elevated consumption gaps, malnutrition, and mortality are largely driven by the limited availability of food stocks, restricted access to functional markets and poor water, health, and sanitation services, which might heighten morbidity risk, and impact more negatively on households' ability to engage in labour for food or resource gathering. An additional factor is the unsustainable use of emergency coping strategies, which entails people spending their savings, borrow money and sell their assets/goods. Emergency coping strategies are begging or selling land or a house. Crisis strategies imply withdrawing children from school and selling productive assets or means of transport.

Severe floods caused by heavy rains and overflowing rivers have affected more than 4.4 million people across Nigeria since July 2022, according to the latest update by the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA). The floods have displaced over 2.4 million people, destroyed more than 340 000 houses, and left 1.9 million children displaced, according to UNICEF. This adds even more pressure on the food security status of millions of Nigerians.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has worsened the situation with skyrocketing prices, affecting basic food commodities and agricultural inputs, in turn affecting the production capacity of farmers. Moreover, the Naira has depreciated on the parallel market by 33% (year-on-year). The ongoing devaluation of the Naira will continue to exert pressure on food prices throughout Nigeria. Nigeria's annual inflation rate increased above 21% in 2022, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), as fuel shortages drove transport costs higher and affected the supply of goods and commodities. Prices of staple food remained stable in November compared to October, due to harvests. However, the year-on-year increase for key staples is significant, over 25%.

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) announced last year the redesign of 200, 500, and 1 000 Naira notes, with a plan to end the use of the old notes by 31 January 2023. The resulting cash shortage has caused severe disruptions in the markets, disproportionately impacting poor and rural communities. Based on a survey carried out by NIF, the inability to withdraw cash has impacted mostly payments for operational costs as well as constraints on certain programming that involved cash assistance. A serious concern is the exclusion of beneficiaries who do not possess bank accounts, which includes the most vulnerable.

Ongoing interventions

ECHO interventions

- DG ECHO allocated EUR 40 million to respond to the urgent needs of conflict-affected population in Nigeria in 2023, including EUR 6 million from the SEAR.
- Sectors: food assistance, health and nutrition, protection, and WASH/Shelter, are priority sectors. DG ECHO provides aid mainly through cash, vouchers, and in-kind deliveries.
- Advocacy: EU/DG ECHO is a leading voice in humanitarian advocacy on the Northeast.

Other actors' main interventions

- USAID/BHA, and FCDO have announced severe funding cuts for 2023, including on emergency food assistance programming. FCDO budget for Nigeria is expected to be the lowest since the 90s, and USAID/BHA is expecting a 28% budget cut compared to 2022.
- WFP's budget is expected to be significantly affected by this budget reduction, and wider gaps in the emergency food response are to be expected in 2023 compared to 2022.

Needs and opportunities

- Improve prioritisation of assistance and vulnerability assessment, ensuring greater coverage for the most vulnerable groups, especially in a context of funding decrease.
- Assist forcibly displaced people from the Maiduguri Metropolitan Council (MMC) and Jere camp closure when they present themselves to a formal camp.
- Leverage funding to assist all vulnerable IDPs in the garrison towns' camps who do not have access to long-term sustainable livelihood opportunities.
- Where feasible, immediately support agriculture in the crop season to ensure better agricultural production in a "do no harm" and principled manner.

- ## East and Southern Africa

Ethiopia

Situation and evolution

The Ethiopia HRP 2023 was published late February 2023 and amounted to USD 2.16 billion, with an estimated 20.1 million people in need of food assistance. This is considered a conservative figure compared to the scale of people in need in the country following years of conflicts and climate shocks. It is likely that the number will increase during the mid-term review, linked with a possible early start of the hunger season (see the below paragraph). The number of people in need of food assistance in drought-affected areas (south, south-eastern parts of the country) have surpassed 13 million people, out of which 11 million are extremely food insecure. According to the HRP, 9.4 million vulnerable people require post-drought livelihood assets rebuilding.

Food access is problematic for a large share of the Ethiopian population, already suffering from high inflation. According to FEWS Net February Price Bulletin, the price of maize (one of the main staple foods), has started the year much higher than the five-year average, and much higher than the prices in 2022. This is increasing the vulnerability of the poorest.

Conflict and displacement remain a key driver to food insecurity in northern Ethiopia, including Tigray, Amhara and Afar. The agreement signed on 2 November 2022 between the Federal Government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) to cease hostilities has led to improvements in the security and humanitarian access situation in the zone, although the situation remains dire.

In northern Ethiopia, the agreement signed on 2 November 2022 between the Federal Government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) to cease hostilities has brought improvements in market prices of food commodities, as reported by WFP Market Watch. However, food and nutrition needs remain high and acute malnutrition has been reported to be increasing. The lack of adequate health services, severely damaged during the conflict, will likely further deteriorate the health of the population.

In addition, 896 000 refugees rely on humanitarian food assistance in the country.

Emergency (IPC/CH phase 4) and Crisis (IPC/CH phase 3) outcomes will likely increase in several areas of the country. Existing outlooks (FEWS Net) indicate that Tigray remains the highest concern. The latest WFP Food Security Assessment in Tigray in June 2022 found that 89% of the households were food insecure and 47% were severely food insecure (of a population of 6 million). Despite the positive developments since the signing of the agreement, there are still important bottlenecks preventing unfettered access.

The southern Part of Somali Region, as well as Bale, East Bale, Borena and South Omo, are also in IPC/CH phase 4 throughout the outlook period (until May 2023). However, in the second half of March, rains have started, and almost more than three-quarters of the country received above normal rainfall conditions. Despite this, the recovery phase takes time for the animals to recover and start milking, which takes more than a year in case of cows. Hence, this means the effect of the drought will continue to linger even after the official end of the drought. Since October 2021, the Somali regional government estimates that 4.5 million livestock have died, while most of the livestock in the drought-affected areas are weak and at risk of death.

Consistent increase in acute malnutrition is reported across the country. People in need of nutrition support are estimated to be 7.4 million under the HRP 2023 – including Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM – targeting 1.1 million children) and Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM – targeting 2.3 million children), U5 and Pregnant Lactating Women (PLW – 954 000 targeted). There is a widespread shortage and/or irregular availability of critical nutrition commodities, affecting the nutrition response. Trends show there is a 23% increase of children with severe acute malnutrition with highest risk of death reaching health facilities since early 2022. From newly admitted cases, 12.8% were admitted to stabilization centres due to medical complications. Admission rates in November 2022 were slightly lower at 87% compared to 91% in October.

Drivers

Conflict in the northern part of the country is affecting three regional states directly (Tigray, Afar and Amhara), generating displacement. Other parts of the country are also impacted by localised conflicts, which challenge the food and nutrition security of the affected populations and impede humanitarian access. Overall, about 4.7 million people are internally displaced in camps or out of camps (HNO draft).

Drought is reported in the East, South, and south-eastern and central Rift valley areas. It is currently affecting Afar, Somali Regional State, southern Oromia, West Arsi Zone of Oromia, southern and Rift valley areas of the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region.

The above and other production-related challenges, such as lack of input provision and administrative bottlenecks, have led to unprecedented **food price increases**, further impacting the already deteriorated households' purchasing power.

The crisis in Ukraine and macro-economic issues have affected food imports and market prices. In June 2022, inflation across the country reached the highest rate in Eastern Africa (34%). Only during the first half of 2022, food prices increased by 26% and the cost of the food basket by 33% (65.2% in one year). Despite price control measures, petrol prices showed a marked increase compared with pre-war levels (+16%). Between June 2021 and June 2022, Ethiopia recorded one of the highest year-on-year depreciations of local currency, down by 194% against the USD.

Access constraints, due to insecurity and major bureaucratic impediments, is reducing the capacity of humanitarian agencies to deliver in western Oromia, Benishangul-Gumuz and parts of Tigray, despite the cessation of hostilities agreement.

Ongoing interventions

DG ECHO interventions

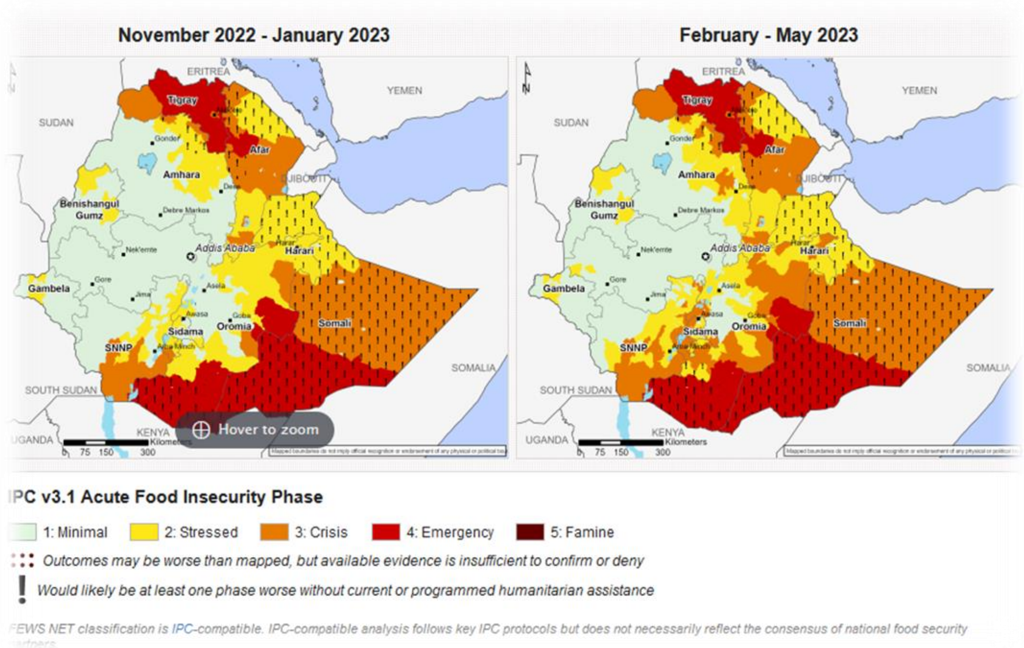
- EUR 60.5 million allocated in 2023 and EUR 76 million allocated in 2022.
- The allocation in 2022 went to food assistance (16%), WASH (7%), health (11%), nutrition (18%), shelter and non-food items (4%), protection (7%), DRR/DP (15%), coordination (4%), logistics (6%) education (6%) and multi-purpose cash (7%).

Other actors' main interventions

- The Ethiopian Humanitarian Country Team (EHCT) produced a dedicated drought response plan (USD 1.66 billion) to which contributions have been made, mainly by the US (over USD 400 million). Currently, the plan is largely under-funded. The HRP 2023 was published in February 2023.
- The Ethiopia Safety Net programme has a crisis/shock response capacity besides its routine response covering over 8 million people.

Needs and opportunities

- Scaling up of an integrated and coordinated response is urgently needed.
- Need to produce comprehensive, reliable and comparable assessments and related analyses to support targeted responses. The resumption of the IPC/CH analysis in Ethiopia is a top priority.
- Need to enhance support from development actors to build further resilience of affected communities.



Source: Fewsnet

Kenya

Situation and evolution

The October to December (OND) rainy season has been characterised by late onset, sporadic, and poor spatial and temporal distribution of rains. Humanitarian partners estimate that there are 5 million people in need of humanitarian food assistance in early 2023 in the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL) region, including 4.4 million Kenyans and 602 000 refugees. Between March and May 2023, it is estimated that the number will rise to around 6 million (5.4 million Kenyans and 600 000 refugees).

In the absence of humanitarian food assistance, FEWSNET is warning that some households in Turkana and Marsabit are likely to fall into catastrophe (IPC/CH phase 5). 942 000 children below the age of five require treatment for acute malnutrition, compared to 884 464 in August 2022. 134 000 pregnant and lactating women require treatment for acute malnutrition. By June 2023, 970 214 children are projected to be acutely malnourished. An estimated 2.6 million livestock deaths have been reported in the ASAL counties. Most open water sources have dried up, increasing trekking distance to water sources. 65% of crop failure has been registered in marginal agricultural areas.

In the education sector, absenteeism is raising and retention declining, as families turn to different copying mechanisms, resulting in increased child labour. On 21 October, the UN, together with the government of Kenya, have launched the 2023 Kenya Drought Response Plan worth USD 472.6 million. To date, only 38.5% of the appeal is financed.

With more than 2 000 newcomers every week, UNHCR faces the emergency influx of refugees in Turkana (Kakuma and Kalobeyei camps) and Garissa (Dadaab complex). Over 80 000 new arrivals came from Somalia in the last two years - 45 000 of them in 2022. Between January and February 2023, Kenya has received over 27 800 newcomers, respectively 12 570 in Kakuma/Kalobeyei and 15 248 in Dadaab complex. The numbers are increasing once again after the trends in December. Regional trends are showing possible increase in the numbers. UNHCR reported of over 13 000 onward movers from Uganda arriving to Kenya claiming better possibilities of getting humanitarian assistance in the latter country. The January – December 2023 UNHCR drought appeal is worth USD 43 million to respond to the needs of 856 000 people with specific needs affected by the drought in Kenya.

The drought has contributed to create a conducive environment for a cholera outbreak, which since October 2022 has led to 5 379 cases confirmed and 90 deaths (case fatality rate of 1.7%).

The drought-induced decline in crop production and the related reduced availability of cereals on markets has increased food prices. The fallout of Ukraine's invasion adds onto this, as increased production costs (fuel and inputs) are also contributing to the price spikes. Due to reduced availability, food inflation is exceeding annual inflation in Kenya, with food price increases almost doubling the annual inflation (13.8% vs. 7.9%). Over the last year, the price of the local food basket has increased particularly for maize, flour, and wheat/grains (up to 123%), thus leading to a significant increase of the Minimum Expenditure Basket (up to 35% in Turkana County).

Drivers

Limited access to food is compounded by several factors. **Climatic shocks** are an important one: five consecutives poor rainy seasons have led to severe droughts.

High fuel prices are pushing up the inflation rate, including food inflation rates, leading to a significant increase in the overall cost of living.

The country is affected by **localised population movements linked to resource-based tensions**. Local conflicts have emerged over resources (among the ASAL pastoral communities), and cross-border displacement has increased, induced by the drought (with reports of over 45 000 individuals newly arrived in Dadaab refugee camp alone).

The worsening **economic crisis** is lowering incomes, and the Kenyan shilling is strongly depreciating against the US dollar.

The **Russian invasion of Ukraine** is contributing to the increase of food prices on local market, particularly for wheat, further highlighting the dependency on imported goods such as fertilisers, fuel, and wheat.

Ongoing interventions

ECHO interventions

- Total funding HIP 2022: EUR 16.4 million.
- Allocation for priority sectors: food assistance (WFP EUR 4 million + Kenya Cash Consortium EUR 1.5 million for multi-purpose cash assistance), health and nutrition (IRC EUR 2.4 million + UNICEF EUR 1 million). From the EDF top-up: EUR 1.5 million for food assistance for encamped refugees (WFP) and EUR 0.5 million for provision of Ready to Use Therapeutic Food – RUTF (UNICEF).

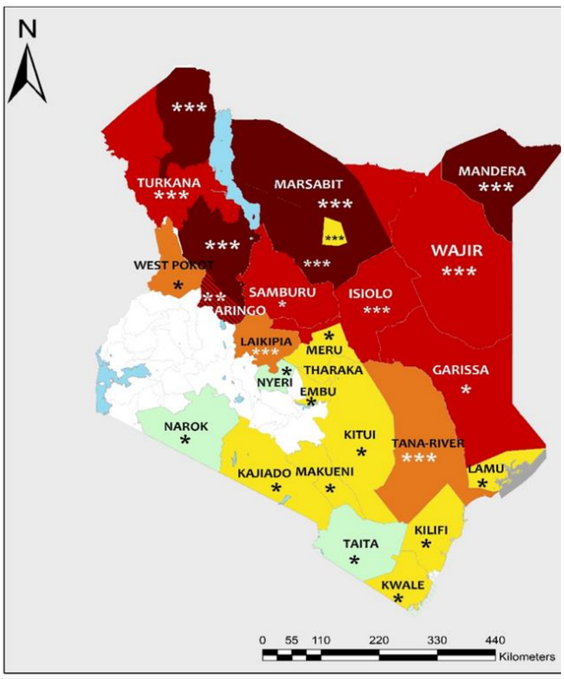
- Total funding HIP 2023: EUR 12.5 million. The very limited funding and the emergency situation related to the refugees' new arrivals is not allowing the allocation of funding to the drought in the ASAL.

Other actors' main interventions

- The USD 290 million Kenya Drought Appeal launched by OCHA in 2022 has been financed with USD 178.8 million only (or 61.7% of the appeal).
- Following the August 2022 support from the US government worth USD 310.9 million, the USA is the first responder to the drought with approximately 72.5% of the funding received, followed by Germany (7%), the EU (5.5%), CERF (4.3%), and Canada (2%).
- On 20 March 2023, Kenya has received 25 000 metric tons of wheat donations jointly bought by eight countries to curb the rising hunger in the country. The consignment, received in the Port of Mombasa, includes 16 000 metric tons of sorghum from the United States of America through USAID.

Needs and opportunities

- Funding gap: additional short and long-term financial support is required.
- Improve prioritisation of assistance for the most vulnerable groups.
- Explore nexus possibilities with the EDF de-committed funds (ECHO EUR 2.55 million for humanitarian food assistance in Kenya and Djibouti, and INTPA EUR 10 million for food production).
- Advocate with other services and donors for increased engagement in Kenya.



Source: IPC/CH Analysis 20.02.23 - March to May 2023 forecast

Madagascar

Situation and evolution

According to the latest IPC/CH analysis published on 4 January 2023, due to the persisting drought in the Grand Sud and after-effects of the cyclones in the Grand Sud-Est, more than two million people were expected to face high levels of food insecurity (IPC/CH phase 3 or above) in these areas, including 252 000 people in Emergency (IPC/CH phase 4), during the lean season (November 2022 - March 2023).

Besides the prolonged drought and reduced crop production in the 2022–2023 harvest season, the impact of 2022 cyclones on crops also contributed to high levels of food insecurity in the Grand Sud Est regions.

Tropical Cyclone Freddy made landfall (again) on the eastern coast of Madagascar on 21 February 2023 just north of Manajary, an area that was hit and impacted by two tropical cyclones in February 2022 (Batsirai and Emnati) and by Cyclone Cheneso only a few weeks before (Jan 2023). Two weeks later, the cyclone returned to Madagascar as an intensified strong tropical storm that almost reached the south-west coast. At 50 km off the coast of Tulear, it brought up strong rains and wind between 4[t] and 7[t] March 2023, leading to damages, mainly in Tulear, Morombe and Morondava. The timing coincided with the main rice planting season and secondary rice harvest in the north and central areas, and cereal and legume planting in the south. The damage caused and subsequent flooding has had an impact on all aspects of food security including the availability of food for interim consumption, the halting of income activities for households who rely on casual labour, the destruction of food stock and livestock leading to a lack of assets to rely on in the future, and the reduced prospect of a normal harvest this season. https://www.acaps.org/country/madagascar/crisis/country-level#

Drivers

Climatic shocks exacerbated by climate change further compound food insecurity in Madagascar.

Southern Madagascar continues to experience its worst drought in 40 years, leaving part of the population fighting for survival. More than 3 years of consecutive severe drought have wiped out harvests and hampered access to food in the Grand Sud.

Between January and April 2022, six tropical cyclones and storms hit Madagascar, affecting more than 960 000 people in the North and Southern part of the country. Floods affected about 60 000 hectares of rice fields, which resulted in a below-average harvest in May, undermining both farmers' livelihoods and food supply in country.

In 2023, tropical cyclones Cheneso and Freddy and the subsequent flooding have impacted the food security of households in Madagascar. Food security is generally expected to deteriorate due to the flooding, as asset depletion is anticipated along with a negative impact to income generation.

Despite the imposition of price ceilings on a few basic goods in April-September and efforts to limit urban transportation tariff increases (Taxibe), headline inflation rose from about 4% in 2020 to 10.8% year-on-year in November 2022, reflecting high international prices and the direct and indirect effects of a 43% fuel price increase in July 2022.

Internal migration to northern districts has increased as people search for better livelihood opportunities and income sources.

Political risks are likely to increase ahead of the presidential elections. Banditry, cattle rustling, and lawlessness affect livelihoods, amplifying food insecurity.

Ongoing interventions

ECHO interventions

- In 2022, EU humanitarian assistance amounted to nearly EUR 20 million to respond to the food insecurity and nutrition emergency needs, and to reinforce early warning systems to drought in Grand Sud, along a nexus approach. This amount also includes the EUR 4.25 million allocated to support the scale-up of food and nutrition assistance and last-mile delivery, further undermined by Russia's invasion of Ukraine and its impact of global food prices.

- In 2023, as part of the HIP for 2023, the response focuses on the Great South and Great South-East of Madagascar (emergency response, emergency education and preparation for cyclones). A total of EUR 15 million is being allocated, including EUR 1.2 million from EHRC for a helicopter managed by WFP and EUR 0.5 million ALERT funding in emergency response to Tropical Cyclone Freddy.

- Priority sectors: Food Assistance and nutrition integrating protection (EUR 9,5 million for WFP, UNICEF and ACF), disaster preparedness (EUR 5.1 million for WFP and IFRC), Education in Emergency, logistics, health and WASH.

Other actors' main interventions

- The EU development cooperation programming for the next period includes structuring long-term activity in the Grand Sud. The EU's development programme in Madagascar (country-wide) amounts to EUR 325 million for the 2021-2024 period, with three priority areas: governance and human development, sustainable growth and jobs, and Green Deal.

- A new flash appeal is being developed by the Humanitarian Country Team for 2023. A summary was published on 19 February, while discussions are still ongoing to decide whether or not it should be amended to include the increased needs following the impact of cyclones Cheneso and Freddy. The flash appeal builds on the national response plan and targets 1.9 million people in the Grand South and East who are estimated to need humanitarian assistance between January and December 2023. The total funding requirements is USD 201.6 million, with the biggest requirements going to water and sanitation, food security and education.

- The Madagascar Flash Appeal 2022, accounting for USD 219.3 million, has been funded for more than 70%. The USA, CERF, the EU, Germany, and France are the larger donors of the appeal according to the Financial Tracking Services of OCHA. Some of this funding is supporting the humanitarian response in the first months of 2023.

Needs and opportunities

- Ahead of tropical cyclone Freddy, and building on lessons learnt from last year's responses to cyclones Batsirai and Emnati, some 170 humanitarian staff were pre-deployed to the affected areas, together with critical supplies, enabling response to start before, and increase after landfall. This represents a marked shift from the challenges faced last year.

- Need to remain vigilant and engaged in supporting the most vulnerable populations still confronted to the impact of the drought/climate change.

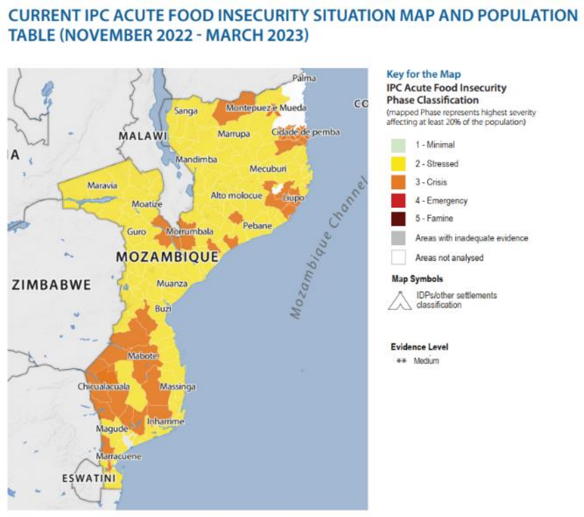
- The mechanisms in place are not sufficiently shock responsive. More investments on resilience building and capacity strengthening activities to support affected communities' livelihoods in areas recurrently affected by climate shocks is critical. The system relies on structures that are overwhelmed, and organisations are not quick in putting in place emergency measures.

- NEXUS: The EDF de-committed funds allocation to DG INTPA provisionally earmarked EUR 10 million for boosting agricultural production in Madagascar (expected duration: 7.5 years).

Mozambique

Situation and evolution

The IPC/CH Acute Food Insecurity Analysis for the period November 2022 - March 2023 confirmed that approximately 3.15 million people are in need of urgent action (2.75 million classified in IPC/CH phase 3 and 400 000 in IPC/CH phase 4). Besides the 34 districts classified in IPC/CH phase 3, the displaced population (IDPs) in Cabo Delgado in the districts of Ancuabe-Chiure, Metuge and Montepuez-Mueda were also classified in IPC/CH phase 3 . It should be noted, that 8 of the 17 districts of Cabo Delgado province – arguably among the most food insecure – were not covered by the present IPC/CH analysis due to lack of data.



CURRENT ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY NOVEMBER 2022 – MARCH 2023		
3.15M 10% of the population analysed	Phase 5	0 People in Catastrophe
People facing high acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above)	Phase 4	398,000 People in Emergency
IN NEED OF URGENT ACTION	Phase 3	2,749,000 People in Crisis
	Phase 2	12,974,000 People Stressed
	Phase 1	16,026,000 People in food security

In the districts classified in IPC/CH phase 3 and above, the main contributing factors to acute food insecurity are cyclones and strong winds – including tropical storm Ana in the provinces of Zambezia (affecting 32% of the population), Tete (24%) and Nampula (11%), and tropical cyclone Gombe in the provinces of Nampula (54%) and Zambezia (17%). Below average and irregular rains in Gaza (63%), Manica (51%), Inhambane and Tete (36%) and Niassa (16%) as well as the increase in food prices and the loss of crops through animal destruction (Niassa) has also been noted.

In the Cabo Delgado and parts of the Niassa and Nampula provinces, insecurity, and violence as a result of population displacement were the main causes of acute food insecurity. The arrival of displaced people in Pemba and Metuge has also increased job competition leading to higher unemployment rates, further exacerbating the food insecurity situation.

The rise in global food and non-food costs is resulting in higher living costs in Mozambique. Compared to the 5-year average, maize grain prices in September are 11% to 47% above the 5-year average in most monitored markets. The above-average trend in maize grain prices in most markets across the country is likely driven by the cumulative effect of successive price increases over the past 4 years, following multiple production shocks including cyclones, floods, and below-average rainfall. High transportation costs and increased demand for non-wheat products (maize, cassava, sweet potato) are also keeping food prices high.

WFP is in the process to roll out the vulnerability-based targeting (VBT) and biometric beneficiaries' enrolment to prioritise assistance according to vulnerability status instead of displacement, including a review of their current beneficiary lists. Although the VBT system is expected to be fully adopted in March 2023, it is realistic to foresee some delays.

Drivers

The **armed conflict** in Cabo Delgado province, according to IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) of November 2022, has until now displaced 1 028 743 people in Northern Mozambique. In Niassa, Cabo Delgado, Nampula, Zambézia, Inhambane, Sofala and Maputo provinces, the estimated number of displaced people increases to 1.12 million people (registration of the provincial delegations of the National Institute for Risk and Disaster Management, September 2022). 92% of these people are in Cabo Delgado, 5.8% in Nampula, and the rest of the displaced population is located in Zambezia, Niassa, Manica, Sofala, Inhambane and Maputo Province.

The current on-going **rain/cyclone season has been particularly difficult** for Mozambique. The double landfalls of tropical cyclone Freddy and the extended riverine floods affecting several provinces in February and March 2023 have had a severe impact on agriculture production. Preliminary GIS assessments conducted by FAO confirms that over 100 000 hectares of cropland were affected (2% of the estimated total agriculture land) and the Mozambican Disaster Management Authority (INGD) reports that 200 000 hectares of farmland were flooded. As a result, the 2023 harvest will be severely affected. More technical assessments are ongoing to better evaluate what percentage of this flooded hectarage could be recovered if seeds and tools are provided to farmers in a timely fashion.

Furthermore, **high food prices** also led to increased food insecurity, aggravated by the consequences of the **crisis in Ukraine**, as wheat supplies from the Russian Federation and Ukraine accounted for an average of 38% of the total wheat imported by the country. The supply disruption and subsequent increase in global prices has resulted in a spike in the prices of basic commodities. In the last quarter of the year, the price of three basic food commodities increased compared to August with percentages ranging from +4.3% for cassava to +33% for vegetable oil.

Mozambique currently imports almost 20% of fertilisers from Russia. High global **fertiliser prices** are a source of concern, as reduced availability/accessibility may result in lower food production in Mozambique, which in turn would result in higher food import needs at a time when global food prices are rising steeply.

Ongoing interventions

ECHO interventions

- EUR 26.3 million were allocated to Mozambique in 2023 so far. This amount includes emergency funding in response to tropical cyclone Freddy, as well as EUR 7.6 million to support food and nutrition assistance and last-mile delivery in Northern Mozambique, where DG ECHO supports assistance mainly through vouchers, cash deliveries and in-kind nutrition support.

Other actors' main interventions

- OCHA draft HRP 2023 in Northern Mozambique (Cabo Delgado, Nampula and Niassa) targets a total of 1 108 955 people under the chapter on Food Security and Livelihoods, of which 78% will be Internally Displaced People. Under the Nutrition chapter, the draft HRP 2023 aims to target 338 586 people (65% IDPs) out of which 98% will be Under-5 children.

- EU NutriNorte (AAP 22) allocates EUR 30 million on Nutrition for a duration of 5 years (2022-2027) targeting the provinces of Zambezia, Nampula and Cabo Delgado.

- US/BHA funding for Humanitarian Food Assistance is likely to drop in 2023 to USD 41 million, with a possibility of a top-up of USD 7 million at a later stage.

Needs and opportunities

- In 2023, at least 2 million people are in need of lifesaving and life-sustaining humanitarian assistance in Northern Mozambique, and it is estimated that USD 512.9 million are required to assist the most vulnerable. This represents a 33% and 32% year-on-year increase respectively.

- Improved prioritisation of assistance by employing a vulnerability-based targeting approach as well as biometric registration of beneficiaries.

- EU NutriNorte (AAP 22) allocates EUR 30 million for nutrition for a duration of 5 years (2022-2027) targeting the provinces of Zambezia, Nampula and Cabo Delgado. The action is currently under programming, and, in the logic of nexus, it is meant to be aligned with ECHO's emergency nutrition intervention in the North.

Somalia

Situation and evolution

The latest IPC/CH analysis, published in February 2023, projects a number of people facing IPC/CH phase 3 or worse of nearly 5 million in January to March, rising to 6.5 million between April and June 2023.

The efforts of national and local authorities and the scale-up of humanitarian assistance to respond to the impact of the longest and most severe drought in Somalia's recent history has prevented famine thresholds from being surpassed during the last analysed period. Despite a slight improvement of the forecasted figures compared to the previous projections, the situation remains extremely serious, and famine is still a possibility from April to June 2023 and beyond if assistance is not sustained and if the 2023 April to June rains underperform, as current forecasts indicate.

In the most likely scenario, approximately 223 000 people are expected to be in IPC/CH phase 5 – Catastrophe – between April and June 2023. The areas and group facing this risk of famine are agropastoral population in Burhakaba district, and IDP settlements in Baidoa and Mogadishu.

This unprecedented level of need is driven by the impacts of five consecutive seasons of poor rainfall, a likely sixth season of below-average rainfall from March to June 2023, and stable but high food prices, exacerbated by concurrent conflict/insecurity and disease outbreaks.

In terms of nutrition, the results of past integrated surveys conducted between May and July 2022 and subsequent IPC/CH acute malnutrition analysis conducted in August remain valid, with the total estimated acute malnutrition burden in Somalia reaching approximately 1.8 million children, including 513 550 children who are likely to be severely malnourished, through July 2023.

A majority of the estimated 3.7 million IDPs across Somalia are poor and have limited livelihood assets, few income-earning opportunities in the context of high food prices, low access to communal support, and high reliance on external humanitarian assistance. New IDPs arrive in desperate conditions and may face challenges accessing humanitarian assistance upon their arrival, especially among marginalized and minority groups.

A study on the mortality patterns commissioned by UNICEF and WHO has estimated that about 43 000 excess deaths occurred in Somalia during 2022, of which half among children under 5 years old. Moreover, between 18 100 and 34 200 excess deaths are forecasted in the first 6 months of 2023 by the same study.

The period under review has also seen an increase of conflict, driven by the continuous offensive against Al-Shabaab by the SNA and local militias, but also an outburst of violence in Lasanood district, all of which contributed to the additional displacement of several dozens of thousands of people, compounding the effect of the drought.

Drivers

Climatic changes remain the primary drivers of the unprecedented and prolonged extreme drought, which is now the longest in recorded history to affect the Horn of Africa. The cumulative impacts of consecutive seasons of poor rainfall and persistent drought are expected to lead to a continuously dire humanitarian situation.

The Gu (April-May-June) is the main wet season in the country and is critical in supporting agricultural activities and replenishing water and pasture. According to the recently released Seasonal Climate Forecast issued by IGAD's Climate Prediction and Applications Centre, there is a 50% likelihood that below normal rainfall (drier than normal conditions) will be observed over most parts of Somalia. This will be accompanied by warmer-than-normal surface temperatures (55% likelihood) over much of the country, with increased chance of up to 70% over the northern areas.

Seasonal climate scientists have observed that the poor forecast 2023 Gu rains are comparable to the forecast conditions of the years 2017 and 2021. Consecutive poor-to-failed harvests, the loss of agricultural income among farmers and the continued loss of livestock among pastoralists are contributing to worsening food security and nutrition outcomes and pushing poor and vulnerable communities to the brink of starvation.

Other drivers of acute food insecurity and malnutrition in Somalia include **high food prices, conflict/insecurity and disease outbreaks** (measles, cholera and acute watery diarrhoea).

Ongoing interventions

ECHO interventions

- ECHO has allocated close to EUR 172 million since December 2021 to the drought response, with EUR 79.5 million allocated in 2022, and EUR 72 million in early 2023.

Other actors' main interventions

- In August 2022, the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator announced a system-wide scale-up of the response, which has been extended for six more months until September 2023. In February 2023, the new Humanitarian Response Plan has been launched, with a funding requirement of USD 2.6 billion (vs USD 2.26 billion in the revised 2022 HRP) and an overall population targeted by humanitarian assistance of 7.6 million (same as revised 2022 HRP).

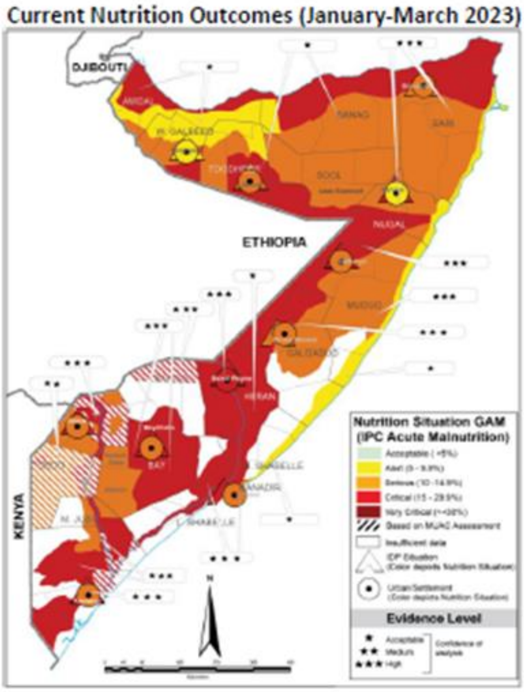
- The final financial reporting shows that the 2022 HRP has been funded at 82,1%, with the main donors being USAID (53.8% of the total funding), EU member states (around 9%), EU (3.9%) and UK (3.7%). As of March 2023, the 2023 HRP is funded at 14.5%.

- An Integrated Response Framework, which aims at responding in a holistic way to newly displaced people and critically underserved people living in areas most hit by the drought, has been developed by the Humanitarian Country Team, to improve the efficiency of the response. This response is also aiming at a better inclusion of chronically underserved marginalised groups in their access to humanitarian aid.

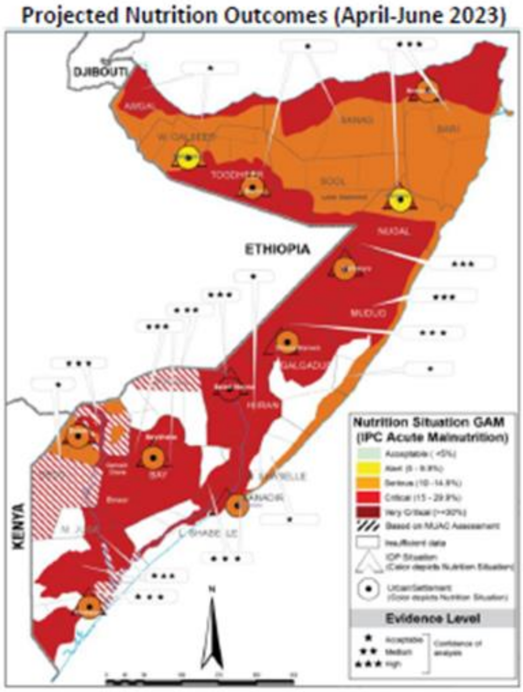
Needs and opportunities

- Most of the funding was given in 2022 and ultimately helped to avoid a famine at the end of the year and in early 2023, but sustained funding is necessary as the crisis continues into 2023. Frontloading this funding is essential to maintain lifesaving assistance, especially given the anticipated low funding levels in March to June.
- Improved prioritisation of assistance, fully implementing the use of the Integrated Response Framework, to ensure a better coverage of populations most in need.
- Urgent scale up of the health, water, sanitation, hygiene, and nutrition services as those sectors have been identified as the main drivers of excess mortality.
- Support the system-wide scale-up to operationalise plans and deliver at scale, in particular by making the most of inter-operable registration and assistance systems between major responders (WFP and IOM).
- Advocate with other services and donors for increased engagement on Somalia through additional funding or reorientation of existing ones.

Current Nutrition Outcomes (January-March 2023)



Projected Nutrition Outcomes (April-June 2023)



Source: IPC/CH analysis – February 2023

South Sudan

Situation and evolution

About 6.6 million people, over half of South Sudan's population (54%), have been experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity, classified in Crisis (IPC/CH phase 3) or worse, between October and November 2022. Of those, 2.2 million people have been experiencing Emergency conditions (IPC/CH phase 4), and an estimated 61 000 people Catastrophe/Famine conditions (IPC/CH phase 5) in Fangak, Canal/Pigi and Akobo in Jonglei State, and Pibor County in the Greater Pibor Administrative Area.

In the post-harvest projection period of December 2022 to March 2023, an estimated 6.31 million people (51.0% of the population) were likely to face Crisis (IPC/CH phase 3) or worse acute food insecurity, with 33 000 people likely to be in Catastrophe (IPC/CH phase 5) acute food insecurity in Akobo and Fangak of Jonglei State; and Pibor County of Greater Pibor Administrative Area. During this period, an estimated 1.97 million people were likely to face Emergency (IPC/CH phase 4) acute food insecurity.

In the lean season projection period of April to July 2023, an estimated 7.8 million people (63% of the population) will likely face Crisis (IPC/CH phase 3) or worse acute food insecurity, with 43 000 people likely to be in Catastrophe (IPC/CH phase 5) acute food insecurity in Akobo, Canal/Pigi and Fangak counties of Jonglei State; and Leer and Mayendit counties of Unity State. During this period, an estimated 2.90 million people are likely to face Emergency (IPC/CH phase 4) acute food insecurity.

South Sudan continues to grapple with persistent food and nutrition insecurity, stemming largely from a combination of multiyear climate shocks, conflict, and socio-economic insecurity. This has eroded household capacity to access food and income.

However, an analysis conducted by FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security estimated net cereal production at 936 200 tonnes in 2022, an 11.5% increase in production when compared to the year before. The cereal deficit is estimated at 485 400 tonnes, 10.2% below the deficit estimated for 2022, and 2% below the 2018-2022 average. The estimated harvested area in 2022 was 1 078 900 hectares, 8.4% above the 2021 level and 15.8% above the average of the previous five years.

The increased production is attributed to security improvements in some areas which allowed displaced households to return their place of origin and engage in agricultural production, and favourable rains over most cropping areas.

Regarding conflict and displacements, despite a lull in conflict events in February 2023 compared to peaks seen in late December and mid-January, the threat of renewed inter-communal conflict persists, particularly in south-western Upper Nile and northern Jonglei, southern Jonglei counties, and Pibor County in Greater Pibor Administrative Area (GPAA) (Figure 2). In the Upper Nile northern Jonglei border area, reports in early February suggested a build-up of troops and mobilization of forces indicative of potential future clashes along the White Nile.

The persistence of poor macroeconomic conditions causes a high cost of living and limits access to food. Despite continued inflows of hard currency from crude oil export and non-oil revenue in the country, the depreciation of the South Sudanese Pound (SSP) against the USD accelerated again in February and March 2023.

Drivers

South Sudan's economy is experiencing a **macroeconomic crisis** caused by the depreciation of the local currency, the global context of rising inflation and food prices and the global impacts of the conflict in Ukraine.

The country is prone to **climatic shocks**, particularly floods and dry spells that affect agriculture, disrupt livelihoods, and hamper humanitarian access.

Persisting **conflict** and youth agitation is disrupting livelihoods and leading to **displacements** and the loss of productive assets. They also disrupt humanitarian delivery.

Low agricultural production results in high humanitarian needs.

Ongoing interventions

ECHO interventions

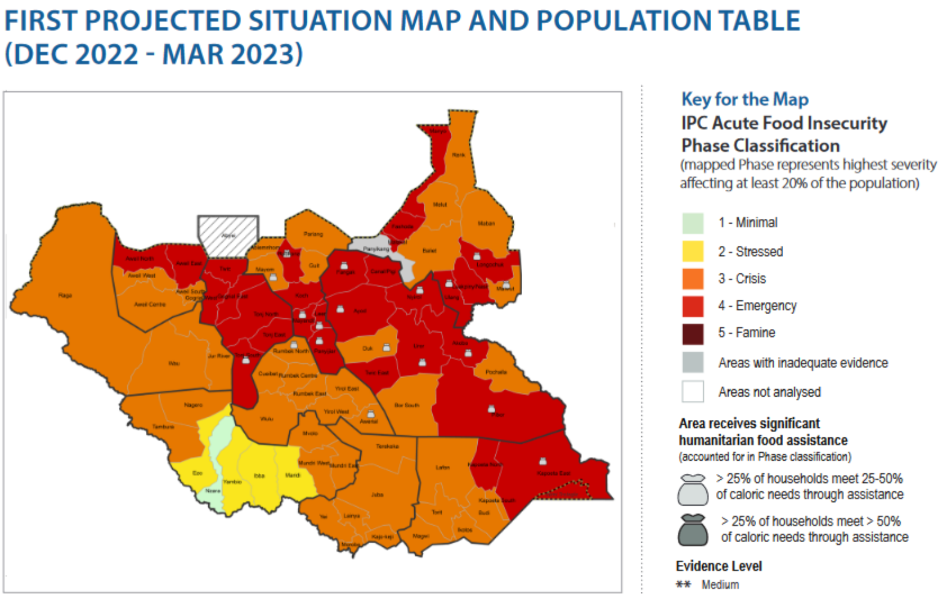
- The ECHO 2023 HIP has a budget of EUR 82 million, allocated as follows: Health 16%, Support and Coordination 15%, Nutrition 15%, FSL-in kind 13%, Cash & vouchers 12%, Protection 10%, WASH 6%, Shelter & CCCM 5%, EiE 4%, Pool Fund SSHF 4%.
- Programmatic Partnerships: UNICEF is contracted for nutrition (EUR 5 million); IFRC for disaster preparedness (EUR 2 million) including MPCT; and Concern for nutrition and health (EUR 2 million).
- ECHO finances emergency food assistance in IPC/CH phases 4 and 5 areas. Agricultural production and road feeders' rehabilitation are also funded in a nexus approach.

Other actor's main interventions

- Key donors (USAID, FCDO) dedicate large part of their funding to food assistance and nutrition, the most critical lifesaving sectors in the country together with health.

Needs and opportunities

- This food crisis is severely underfunded. At the time of the writing of this report, the 2023 HRP is 23% funded (OCHA). The Food, Security and Livelihoods (FSL) sector is 35.7% funded and the nutrition sector 28.9% funded.
- Pursue coordination efforts with WFP and FSL actors to increase cash modality wherever feasible and reinforce coordination with development donors to scale-up long-term investments on agriculture, basic services, and infrastructures.
- Monitor malnutrition closely (21% SAM increase in 2022 compared to 2021).
- Activate collective diplomatic advocacy towards the Government of South Sudan to enforce law and reduce violence.
- Explore nexus opportunities with development actors.

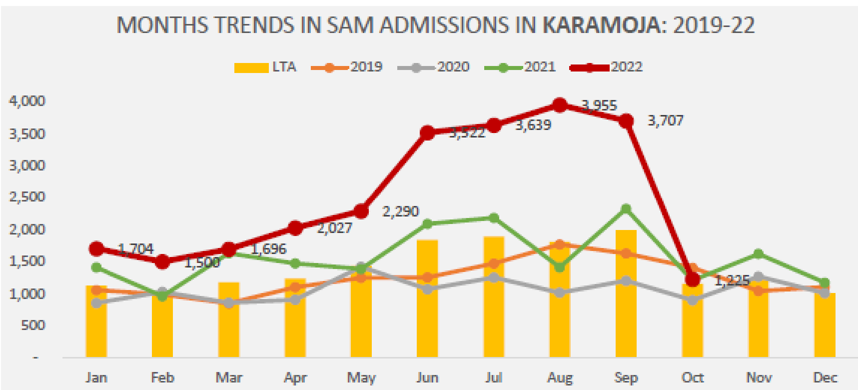


IPC/CH Map, Nov 2022

Uganda

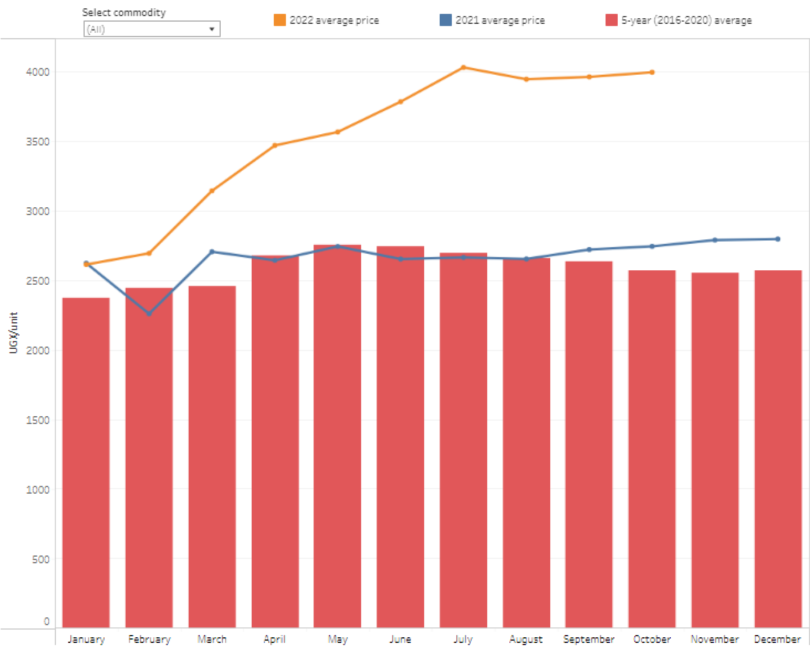
Situation and evolution

A new IPC/CH analysis was released on 25 November 2022, showing an improvement in the situation in Karamoja. Compared to May 2022, the number of people in urgent need of food assistance has decreased from 518 000 to 315 000. It is expected to decrease further to 308 000 by end of January 2023: 276 000 people in IPC/CH phase 3, compared to 428 000 individuals in May 2022, and about 38 000 in IPC/CH 4, compared to almost 90 000 in May. Nutrition surveys for Karamoja have not been updated or undertaken, but admission rates for severely acutely malnourished children have drastically reduced to the long-term-average in October 2022.



Source: Regional Food Security and Nutrition Working Group, November 2022

In October 2022, the average monthly price of the local food basket was 45% higher than in October 2021, which is a slight improvement from September where the food basket was 53% higher than the previous year.

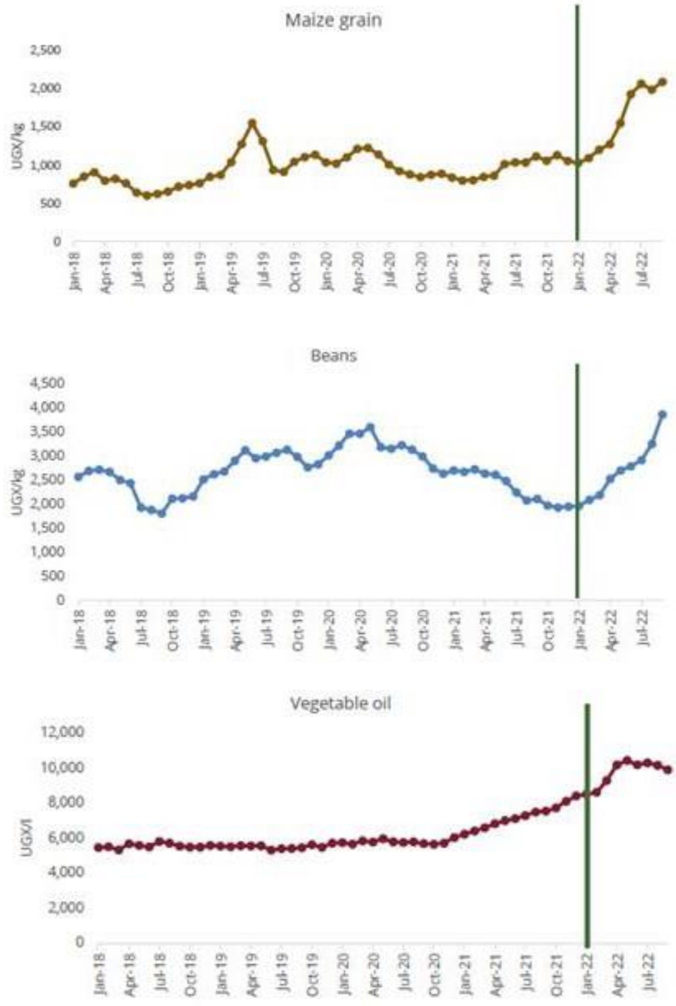


Source: WFP Uganda National Market Monitor

All food commodities continue to show a stabilising trend since July 2022, especially food Ugandans are heavily dependent on, such as Matoke, Millet, Maize, Sorghum. The exception to this is vegetable oil, which has shown a downward trend since July, while still being 30 % above 2021.

In refugee settlements, out of the 1.5 million refugees and asylum seekers, approximately 92% rely on continuous food assistance (either in-kind or in-cash). For refugees the Minimum Expenditure Package (MEB) continues to increase.

Food consumption scores (FCS) for refugees and host populations shows differences, with host populations generally having better food consumption.



Source: WFP: 2022 Refugees and Host community; FSNA Results; 28/10/2022

UNHCR's requirement for 2022 is USD 343.4 million, and on 21 October 2022 was only 43% funded (USD 148.6 million). The Country Refugee Response Plan Emergency Appeal was extended from April to December 2022 and increased from USD 48 million to USD 68 million but was only 24% funded. Due to critical underfunding, WFP has implemented ration cuts since November 2021.

Drivers

Conflict in neighbouring countries causes a regular influx of refugees from South Soudan and DRC (almost 130 000 new refugees in 2022). In Karamoja, there is localised conflict and insecurity.

Climate shocks and hazards often affect the country, such as poor rainfall performance, frequent flash floods with corresponding waterlogging and occasional devastating landslides.

Acute Malnutrition is prevalent, due to inadequate food and water access, poor dietary diversity, structural poverty, low value livelihood options, as well as poor hygiene and sanitation. Very poor levels of food consumption are registered among children of 6-23 months, with only 4% of the children consuming a minimum acceptable diet.

Economic factors, exacerbated by the Russian invasion of Ukraine limit household income sources. The headline inflation rate increased to 10.2% in December 2022, up from 7.9% in July, the highest level since July 2012. Inflation in the cost of food is twice as high, at 22.2%. Transport cost has stabilised with fuel prices decreasing.

Ongoing interventions

ECHO interventions

- As of April, the total HIP 2023 for Uganda stood at EUR 30.5 million.
- Sectors: food assistance 16%; protection 16%; EiE 21%; health 18%; MPCT 13%; coordination 2%; disaster preparedness 11%.

Other actors' main interventions

- Design and feasibility for the Kagera Water Supply Pipeline, including branches to refugee settlements in Isingiro Refugee Hosting District, is ongoing. The concept note by the EU delegation to access funding from the Flexible Mechanism to support the response in the southwest is being finalised.
- In September, the US provided an additional support of USD 82 million: USD 21 million for USAID and USD 61 million for the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (BPRM) with USD 41 million for UNHCR and USD 20 million for other programs.

Needs and opportunities

- The Uganda Refugee Response Plan (RRP) 2023 is at USD 811 million. No additional funding was available for the last month of 2022. UNHCR issued also an Ebola appeal of USD 14.8 million but has so far not received any contributions.
- Recurrent and continuous shortfalls of resources call for extending the donor base, operationalising the needs-based approach through better targeting, and looking for more sustainable and resilient solutions in the context of a protracted refugee crisis.

Zimbabwe

Situation and evolution

According to Rural Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee (ZimVAC) 2022 findings, nearly a third of the urban (1.63 million people) and 3.82 million of the rural populations are facing severe food insecurity. Zimbabwe was included in the Global Network list of Hunger Hotspots in June 2022 due to an erratic rainfall season and consequent drop in crop production, although it was removed in the following edition. An urban ZimVAC exercise is planned for the first quarter of 2023 to obtain an updated understanding of urban populations food insecurity levels.

Headline inflation continued to steadily decelerate with annual inflation dropping 138 percentual points from 230% in January 2023 to 92% in February 2023, and monthly inflation dropping 2.7 percentage points from 1.1% to -1.6% over the same period.

The cost of the monitored minimum expenditure food basket in ZWL increased by around 10% and remained stable in USD terms in both rural and urban markets.

The price of fuel rose by about 15% in ZWL terms and remained stable in USD. The price of hygiene non–food items on average remained stable in both ZWL and USD.

The preliminary findings of the 2023 First Round Crop and Livestock assessment which has just been finalised by the Ministry of Agriculture, shows that the country is likely to produce maize in surplus of at least 800 000 metric tons above the national requirement of 2.3 million metric tonnes. Cereals access on the market will improve significantly in the coming months.

The Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWSNET) projected that Crisis (IPC/CH phase 3) outcomes were likely to continue until the start of harvest in April 2023 in typical deficit-producing locations. Communal and resettlement areas in surplus-producing areas are likely to remain stressed (IPC/CH phase 2) and minimal (IPC/CH phase 1) during the projection period.

The SMART survey (yet to be published) conducted by the Nutrition Cluster under the lead of UNICEF in 6 districts in October/November 2022 confirmed an increased prevalence of global acute malnutrition (GAM), notably in Mudzi where the prevalence of combined GAM has reached 11.9%.

Urban vulnerability is also on the rise, with the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare estimating that up to 2.2 million people in urban areas are food insecure. Findings and recommendations from the ongoing urban livelihoods and vulnerability assessment will further inform the urban situation and humanitarian actions.

Many parts of Zimbabwe continue to face a water crisis, with some places in Harare going without safe water for years, and residents turning to potentially contaminated wells and boreholes. This is of concern as Zimbabwe is on alert for any potential outbreak of cholera.

In the coming months, the political climate, the likely decision not to renew the Zimbabwean Exemption Permits (ZEP), and the possible xenophobia attacks against Zimbabwean migrants in neighbouring South Africa could lead to a compounding humanitarian protection crisis. Significant advocacy with humanitarian actors, the South African and Zimbabwean governments, and the protection actors, as well as the political actors on both sides, is needed urgently to highlight the vulnerabilities of those likely to be affected. The humanitarian community is working on a contingency plan for the ZEP holders (and their families) who are expected to return to Zimbabwe with a planning figure of 200 000 where they do not necessarily have a place to settle safely and in dignity.

Drivers

The Zimbabwe current food crisis is driven by the impact of the **below-average 2022 crop production**, with severe food insecurity in many areas in which households have already depleted stocks from their own production. Climatic events affecting crop production and other livelihoods have contributed to this situation.

A protracted **economic crisis**, characterised by high inflation rates, has sharply eroded the households' purchasing power.

Despite progressive declines in monthly and annual inflation over the last months, the cost of living remains very high. Poor households continue to struggle to meet their food and non-food needs. According to the World Bank, Zimbabwe's January 2023 real annual **food inflation rate was 121%, the highest in the world**.

Ongoing interventions

ECHO interventions

- In 2022 DG ECHO-funded interventions in Zimbabwe - excluding regional actions – amounted to EUR 6.8 million. This included the EUR 4 million allocated for food assistance (through cash in urban settings) to support the scale-up of food and nutrition assistance delivery, undermined by the ripple effects of the war in Ukraine.
- In 2023, DG ECHO is allocating EUR 6.7 million, including EUR 2.7 million for environmental health preparedness (Finn Red Cross, UNICEF, and IOM) and EUR 4 million for food assistance through cash in urban setting. With IOM, EU humanitarian assistance also aims to support vulnerable migrant returnees, strengthen preparedness for displacement, and improve the management of mixed migration flows.

Other actors' main interventions

- The Financial Tracking Service (FTS) of OCHA reports an overall humanitarian aid funding for Zimbabwe in 2023 of USD 30.6 million with the main contributor being the USA, followed by Germany and the EU. More than 50% of this amount goes to the food security sector.

Needs and opportunities

- The situation of Zimbabwean returning migrants from South Africa increases the pressure on urban communities already significantly affected by protracted crises, unemployment, and insufficient social services.
- The politicisation of humanitarian assistance is expected to further increase in the run-up to the 2023 national elections. Of particular concern is the shrinking of democratic space, the lack of access for humanitarian organisations to people in need, and the capacity to operate in accordance with humanitarian principles.
- In this challenging operating environment, the lack of data is a major constraint to fully understand the severity and scale of a crisis. More transparency is required from all stakeholders. Coordination amongst donors and between (humanitarian and development) partners requires more attention to better target people in need.

Sudan

Situation and evolution

Armed clashes broke out in Sudan in mid-April 2023, pitching the armed forces against paramilitary groups. The information presented below refers to the state of play prior to the outbreak of the clashes, as currently the situation remains extremely fluid, and those new developments will likely impact negatively the food security situation in the country.

The Security Council extended sanctions on Sudan through March 12, 2024.

A transitional framework for the agreement was signed on April 6, for a new transitional government formed on April 11, 2023.

Over 130 political violence events and more than 90 reported fatalities occurred from January 1 to March 10, 2023. Darfur communal militias were involved in over 60 incidents of violence against civilians, as reported by Bringing Clarity to Crisis (ACLED).

Inter-communal conflict has erupted in the Tandaliti area in West Darfur's Ag Geneina locality, about to 30 000 people have fled across the border into neighbouring Chad.

The crop and food supply assessment report indicated that the 2022 national cereal production is estimated at about 7.4 million metric tons, 45% above the output obtained in the previous year and 13% above the average of the previous five years. The deficit of wheat (to be imported) increased from 2 million tonnes by the end of 2021 to 3.5 million tonnes by the end of 2022.

The area cultivated with wheat in the Al Gazira scheme (which typically produces 41% of Sudan's wheat production) decreased to almost a quarter this season due to the reluctance of many farmers to cultivate as they incurred losses last year after the government refused to buy wheat from them.

The prices of staple foods started to increase in March compared to February 2023; this is attributed to high demand as people prepare for Ramadan.

The Central Bank of Sudan announced that the trade deficit in 2022 has reached more than USD 6.7 billion, which is the highest deficit recorded in the last 10 years.

The 2023 tax budget increased significantly in relation to last year. The price of subsidies for electricity decreased by 21%, by 59% for wheat, and by 50% for medicine. In the first quarter of 2023, the government increased the cost of water consumption by 150%, and the cost of sewage by 200%. The government is in the process of lifting subsidies on cooking gas. The cost of living in Sudan per person per month is USD 660. The average salary after taxes in Sudan is $151, which is enough to cover living expenses for 0.2 months. The IMF expects the Sudan unemployment rate to reach 30.6% in 2023, the highest rate in the last 10 years.

The cost of the minimum expenditure basket slightly decreased from SDG 19 718 in January 2023 to SDG 19 070 in February 2023. In March 2023, the average parallel exchange rate remained unchanged from February 2023 and stood at around 600 SDG per USD.

Drivers

The country's political instability persists, the severe macroeconomic conditions, as well as intercommunal conflict, are expected to continue to drive Stressed (IPC/CH phase 2) and Crisis (IPC/CH phase 3) outcomes in Sudan, despite above-average cereal production this year.

Staple food prices slightly declined compared to the pre-harvest period; however, the prices of non-locally produced food items remained high.

The increase in taxes coincided with an increase in service fees (electricity, water, cooking gas), which put more pressure on poor households, coupled with a worsening macroeconomic situation. A shortfall of 3.5 million metric tons of wheat is expected in 2023 (this builds on the assumption that a smooth harvest ends by March 2023) and production is estimated at 0.5 million metric tons, compared to 0.6 million metric tons in the previous season.

Ongoing interventions

ECHO interventions

- DG ECHO mobilised EUR **73** million for humanitarian aid in the 2023 HIP, of which about EUR 25 million (34%) is to respond to food security needs.

Other actors' main interventions

- USAID provided UNICEF with **65 000 cartons** of ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF).
- The African Development Bank Group commits nearly USD 74 million to boost wheat production in Sudan. The EU delegation is preparing to fund food security and livelihoods partners with EUR 90 million through the project “Enhancing Food Security and Resilience of Rural Communities in Sudan”.

Needs and opportunities

- WFP: Available resources shall allow for delivery of unconditional cash-based assistance only until April 2023. Only partial coverage of nutritional support, with interruptions to supply induced by lead times.
- The above-average 2023 national harvest will likely improve food availability and access for most households through April, the post-harvest period.
- A civilian-led government can bring the country on track and advocate for development projects.

• Middle East and North Africa (MENA)

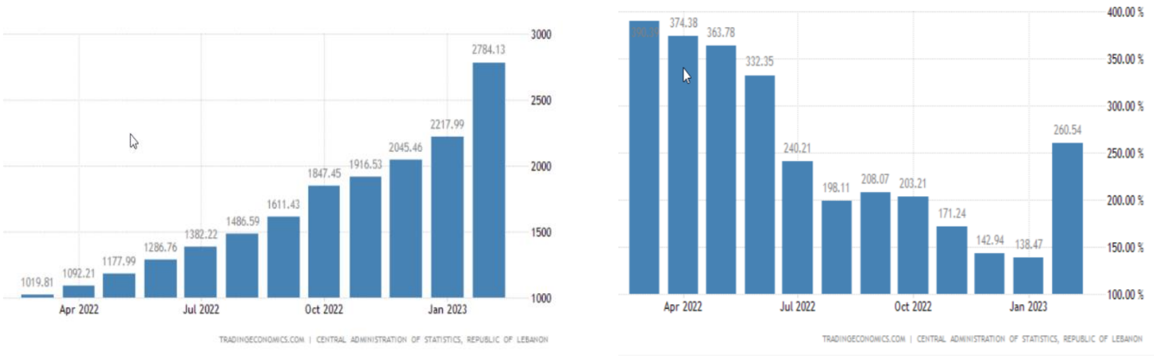
Lebanon

Situation and evolution

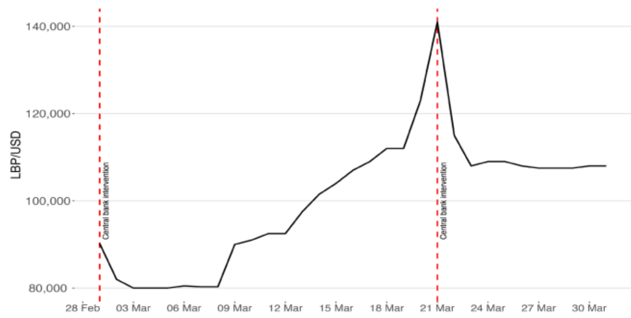
The 2022 Global Report on Food Crises indicated that in 2021, Lebanon ranked third globally among food-crisis countries hosting the highest numbers of refugees/asylum seekers. The prolongation of the economic and financial crisis since Oct 2019, coupled by the lack of political progress for macro-economic reforms accentuate the peril of the already socioeconomically vulnerable and food insecure households.

The consumer price index (CPI) has now risen for 11 months in a row, February registered the largest increase after October 2022 and January 2023. Monthly inflation rose by 25.52% in February, up from 8.4% in the previous month. Annual inflation between February 2022 and February 2023 stood at 190 percent. The annual food inflation increased by 260% in February 2023, the largest increase registered since June 2022. Marked increase in bread prices are indicated, despite a state-mandated-price for Arabic bread; bread prices increased twice in February and continued to soar in March affected by the LBP depreciation and fuel prices. The costs of fuel, transport and communications are at phenomenal highs. Most recently, global price increases linked to OPEC+ cuts pose an additional risk to the national price inflation.

Fig 1: Consumer Price index and Food Price index February 2023



Sharp devaluation/depreciation of the LBP continued but appeared to rebound with concurrent interventions by the Central Bank, although without sustained effects. The informal market rate hit new record lows reaching LBP 143 000 / USD on 21 March, then decreased to LBP 107 500 / USD with high levels of volatility of several thousand pounds per day. Interestingly, the LBP is at a stable level of 97 000 / USD since the start of the Ramadan, indicating potential financial engineering.

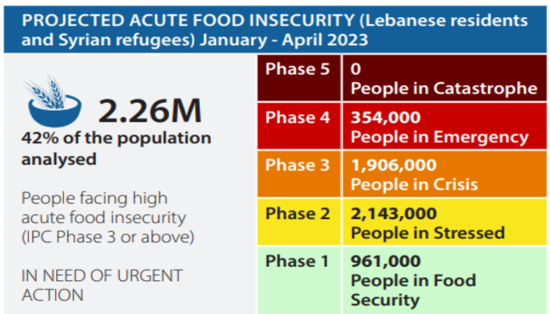


The LBP-USD parallel market exchange rate in March.

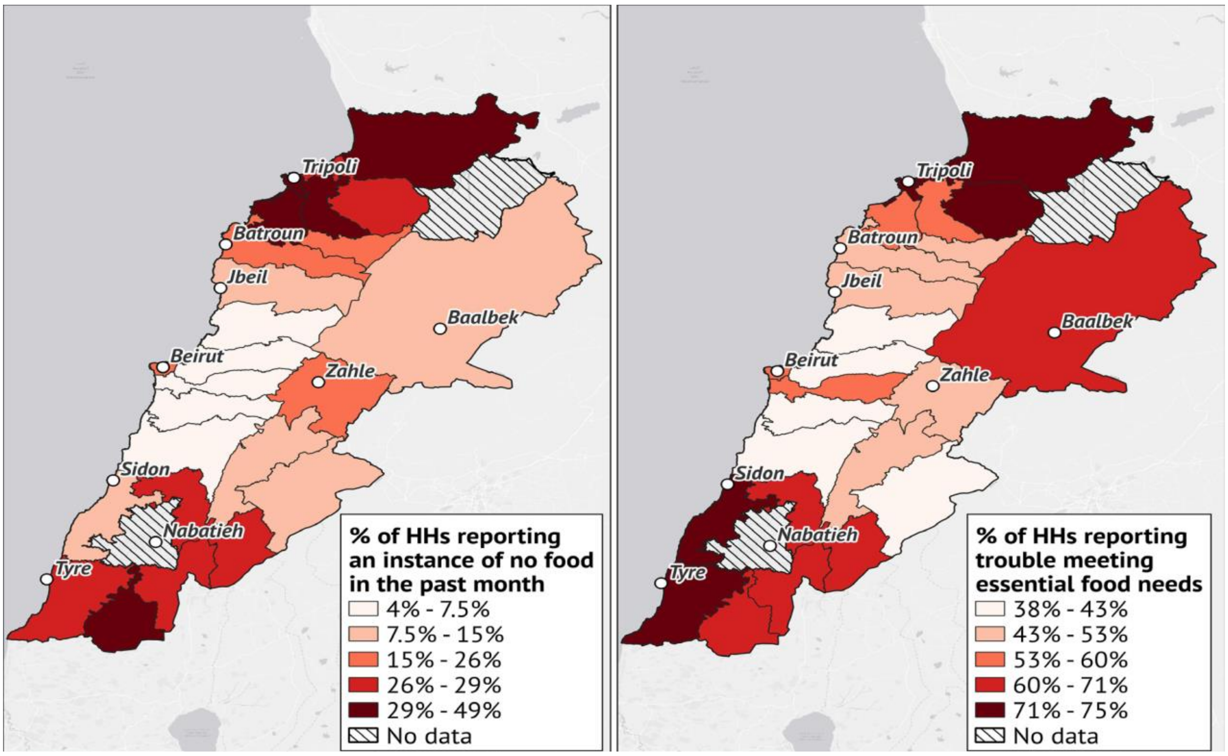
According to available analysis, it is likely that the LBP will continue to depreciate in the coming months. The World Bank anticipated a rate of 200 000 / USD by the end of the year but corrected to this same exchange rate by next summer already. The economy has now been completely dollarized, except for fuel prices. This has contributed to stabilisation of the prices on the market, however purchasing power continues to be eroded due to the continued depreciation of the LBP. For people being paid in LBP, the current situation is impossible to cope with. LBP-based aid programming is equally exposed: even if market-conform rates are achieved for the large cash programmes, recipients will have to spend all assistance in one go to not lose value.

Impact on the food security situation

The cumulative effect of the soaring cost of basic goods and commodities continues to impose burdens on households resulting in reduced consumption patterns, increased tensions mired in occasional protests in different parts of the country.



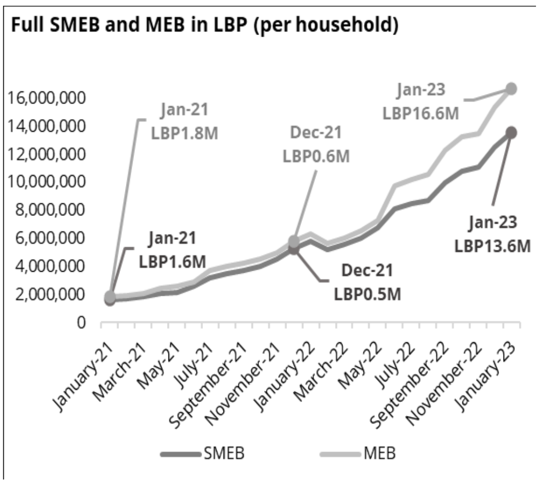
The Lebanon IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis projected that, between January and April 2023, about 2.26 million people, corresponding to 42% of the analyzed population (Lebanese residents and Syrian refugees) are expected to face levels of food insecurity IPC phase 3 (Crisis) or 4 (Emergency). These households report reduced ability to meet essential food needs and bear a significantly heavier debt burden than the less food insecure households. The Multisectoral Needs Assessment (MSNA November 2022) points that most households manifesting high levels of negative food security indicators reside in the North and south of Lebanon.

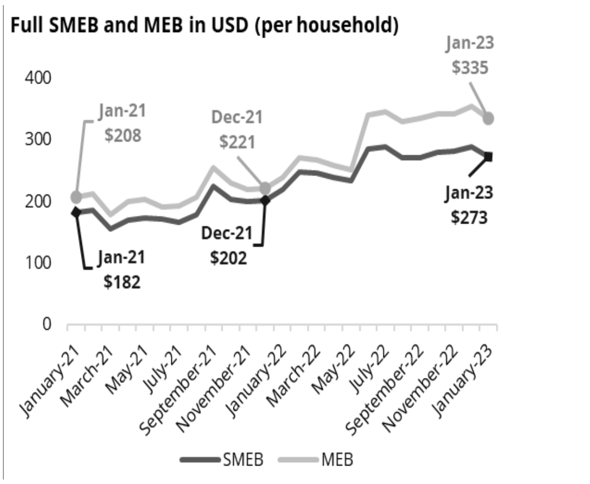


The proportion of households reporting an instance of having no food (left panel) and trouble meeting essential food needs (right panel).

Impact on the cost of the expenditure basket

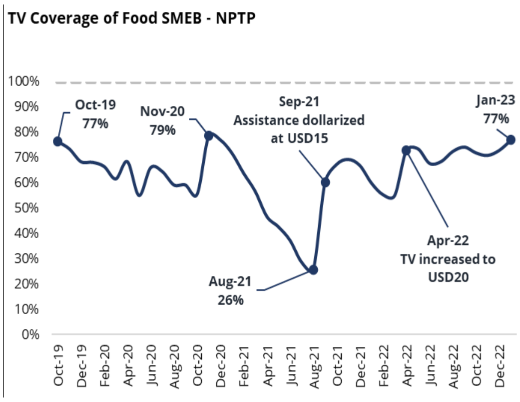
While the cost of the Survival Minimum and Minimum Expenditure Baskets (S/MEB) in LBP have been rising steadily since 2019, the value of the basket in USD has maintained relative stability in comparison. In January 2023 the cost of the MEB and SMEB for a household of five was LBP 16.6 million and LBP 13.6 million respectively, or around a 800% increase since January 2021.

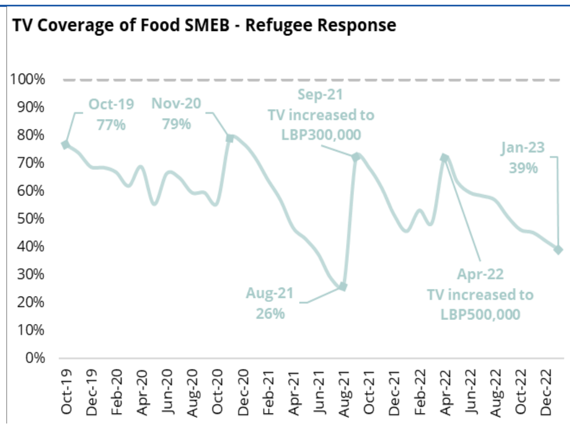


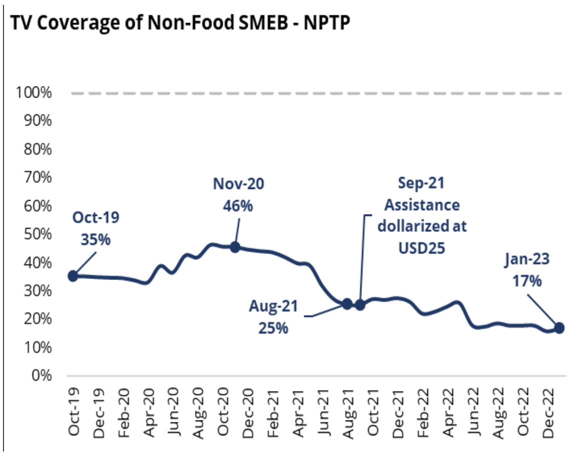


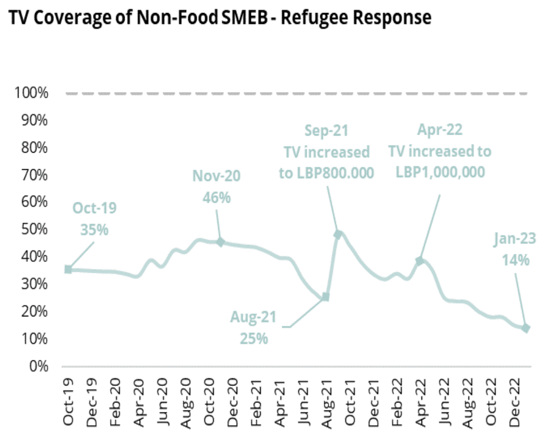
Impact on the effectiveness of the assistance

Support to vulnerable populations in Lebanon is mainly through unconditional cash programs. Assistance packages for refugees is done through different modalities including restricted food vouchers, unrestricted cash for food and multipurpose cash assistance (MPCA). The Lebanese population receives assistance through two national social assistance schemes (NPTP and ESSN). The following diagrams highlight the prolonged impact of the socio-economic situation despite the concurrent review of the transfer value to ensure adequate purchasing power. Since the beginning of the crisis, marked differences in the adequacy of transfer value based on USD and LBP are observed with the LBP recipients experiencing important reduction in their capacity to meet basic needs.









According to WFP, the overall impact and effectiveness of aid has stagnated overtime with key food security indicators (Food Consumption Score - FCS, reduced Coping Strategies Index - rCSI, Livelihood Coping Strategy - LCS) exhibiting limited to no improvement amongst the Syrian refugees in the past year. In November 2022, 56% of the assisted households were food insecure, a limited 38% had acceptable diets (FCS), 73% displayed severe and moderate food consumption-based coping strategies (rCSI), only 42% could afford the cost of survival needs and 58% of assisted households were adopting either emergency or crisis coping livelihood strategies (LCSI).

The response framework is mainly split between the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP), jointly drafted with the Lebanese Government, and the OCHA-led Emergency Response Plan (ERP), targeting Lebanese, Palestinians, and migrants. The food Security sector under the ERP 2022 was 72% funded (approx. USD 48 million out of USD 66.5 million) as per FTS data. LCRP coverage for Food Security in the first quarter of 2022 was 14% (USD 138 million out of USD 975 million), while the coverage level for the Basic Assistance sector in the second quarter of 2022 was 18.2% (USD 96.3 million out of USD 530 million). Cash transfers are used to cover food, often at the expense of meeting other types of needs. WFP had a funding requirement for the period August 2022-January 2023 of USD 422 million. For 2023, the funding horizon looks very bleak, the MPCT programme being cut by at least a quarter due to decreasing funds.

Drivers

The impact of the severe financial and economic crisis has resulted in the downgrading of the country from upper middle-income to lower middle-income country. Low foreign currency reserves have reduced food imports, impacting the replenishment of supplies, as the country depends on imports for 80% of its food needs.

Food imports have suffered continued decrease in 2022 registering an annual percentage decrease in December of 12% compared to December 2021. Recovery to pre-October-2019 or pre-Russian invasion levels will not be realised in the context of the complex economic crisis.

Ongoing interventions

ECHO interventions

- EUR 60 million have been allocated to Lebanon for 2023. EUR 26.7 million are used to fund direct multi-purpose cash transfers for Syrian refugees and Lebanese households who are not included in the Government's social safety net (DG ECHO allocated EUR 100 000 to the multi-sector needs assessment done by REACH/IMPACT in 2022).

Other actors' main interventions

- The European Union, Germany, and the United States of America are the most significant donors to WFP in Lebanon.

Needs and opportunities

- Dollarisation of cash programming to ensure stabilisation of income.
- Harmonization of cash programming to improve efficiency and effectiveness of aid programming in Lebanon.
- Address refugee SMEB and Lebanese SMEB differences and how to effectively implement a program that causes no harm (parity or not, how to address gaps in SMEB coverage).
- Better alignment of refugee programming with national programming ensuring a joined framework allowing for reduced costs and more integrity in programming (inclusiveness SDCs).
- Improve targeting and review the transfer value addressing the need to reduce caseload, without jeopardising support to the most vulnerable and potentially increasing the transfer value
- Advocate for an inclusive and needs-based social protection framework that allows for the poorest (and often illiterate) households to access services, including the stateless.

Syria

Situation and evolution

After 12 years of conflict, Syrians have exhausted all their savings and resilience. In February, a devastating earthquake hit the country and caused unimaginable additional suffering. Around 6,000 people died and over 11,200 were injured. The earthquake destroyed more than 2,260 buildings and damaged more than 32,000 buildings. In total around 8.8 million people were affected across the country with major needs being (cash for) shelter, non-food items, water and sanitation, health, Humanitarian assistance has never been so critical to help families who are being forced to choose between buying food, fuel or medicine.

According to the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) 2023 (published prior to the earthquake) it is estimated that, in 2023, 15 million people or 68% of the population, will need some form of food assistance, versus 64% in 2022. At least 12.1 million people are estimated to be food insecure including 2 million people living in camps, who are considered fully dependent on humanitarian assistance.

According to the latest WFP reports, malnutrition is on the rise with stunting rates among children reaching 28% in some parts of the country and maternal malnutrition prevalence 25% in Northeast Syria. 2.9 million people are at risk of sliding into hunger if the crisis continues to worsen. While food needs were found to be widespread across all governorates of Syria, the prevalence of food insecurity was found to be the highest in Idlib (74%), Quneitra and Al-Raqqa (68%), Aleppo (61%), Deir Ezzor (56%), Al-Hasakeh and Hama (53%).

In December 2022, food prices in Syria had doubled compared to the same month the year before. The cost of the minimum expenditure basket was 11 times higher than the minimum wage. The cost of the food basket has increased four times in the last two years and was thirteen times higher than three years ago. In April 2022, The World Food Programme (WFP) was forced to reduce food rations to 995 kcal and will have to reduce the number of beneficiaries from July 2023 if the crisis remains underfunded. The 2022 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for the Food Security and Agriculture cluster was funded at 63%, leaving a more than USD 630 million gap.

South-central Syria and Government of Syria (GoS) controlled areas (GCA) rely on Russia for their wheat supply. The depreciation of the local currency, combined with several other economic stressors such as fuel and electricity shortages, has resulted in a significant and noticeable socio-economic decline. Surging food prices are taking a toll on vulnerable households as food accounts for a significant proportion of their spending while the increase in commodity prices is limiting the fiscal space for government transfers on food and energy.

In Northwest Syria (NWS), some 1.4 million people rely on WFP food assistance delivered cross-border, that is heavily dependent on imports transiting through Turkey, many of which originate from Ukraine or Russia. The UN Security Council resolution mandating cross-border assistance has been extended only for six months until July 2023, limiting the capacity of humanitarian actors to plan long-term procurements. The continuation of the WFP and of the humanitarian response needs a sustainable solution independent of the UN Security Council resolutions.

Drivers

Political conflict, economic collapse, the Lebanon financial crisis, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the Covid-19 pandemic, cholera outbreaks, the earthquake, climate change resulting in severe drought, damaged infrastructure, water scarcity and historic low yields are the key drivers of food insecurity.

Syria is currently facing one of its worst water crises, severely impacting the population's access to both drinking and irrigation water directly impacting food security. Wheat production in the last two year was around 1.045 million tonnes per year, down from 2.8 million tonnes in 2020 and from 4.1 million tonnes before 2011. It is expected that the Syrian Pound will continue to depreciate. In NW Syria, price increases, insufficient reserves, and the inability of the de-facto authorities to set up and implement a fully-fledged food security policy will continue to have adverse effects.

Ongoing interventions

DG ECHO interventions

- EUR 142.5 million were initially allocated in 2023. With the earthquake allocation the total funding so far in 2023 reaches EUR 171.4 million. Approximately 55% of the total budget is contributing directly to food security: in-kind food-basket distributions, cash assistance, livelihoods, and more than 20% of ECHO budget allocated to early recovery activities.
- DG ECHO has been advocating with the Government of Syria and the Central Bank of Syria to introduce an adjustable preferential rate for INGOs and UN agencies to compensate for the depreciation of the Syrian pound and hyperinflation.

- In May 2022, DG ECHO organised an event on food assistance and food security in the margins of the 6th Brussels conference on Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region, trying to mobilise donor support for a better coordinated response. This year, the EU will host a 7th Brussels conference on 15 June on the Future of Syria and the Region, preceded by a Day of Dialogue with Civil Society on 14 June.

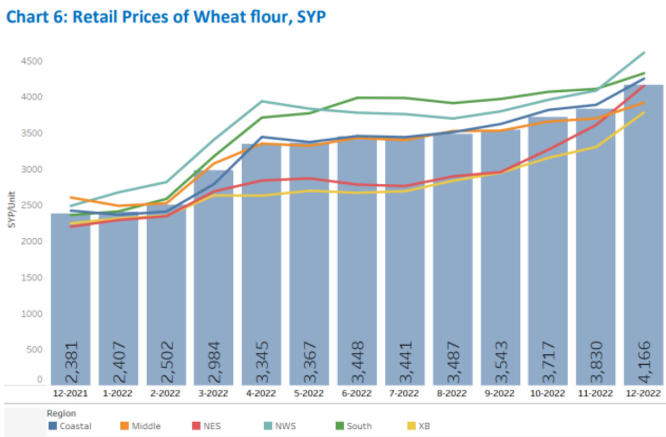
Other actors' main interventions

- DG NEAR: additional allocation of EUR 10 million for food/livelihoods

Needs and opportunities

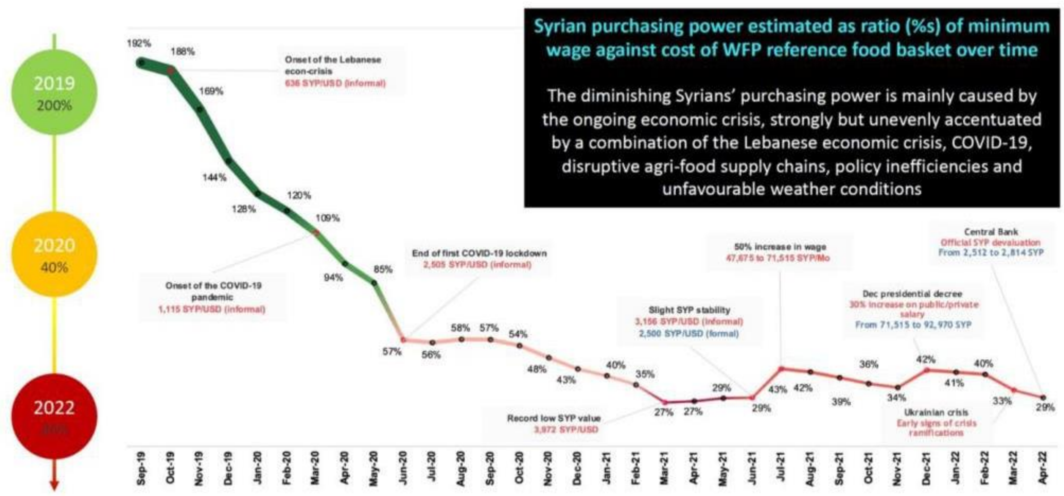
- Prioritise funding of immediate lifesaving response to vulnerable Syrians, with a focus on food and nutrition assistance, as well as early recovery interventions.
- Advocate with other EU services and donors for increased engagement on Syria for integrated programming that boosts ability of people to earn a living: livelihoods programmes, including agricultural projects, market strengthening, job creation and restoration of basic services.
- Develop strategies to operate in a context of high inflation and currency depreciation supporting hybrid modalities balancing cash and in-kind assistance.
- Strengthen humanitarian cash and shock-responsive mechanisms.

Retail prices of Wheat Flour in Syria in 2022 (in SYP)



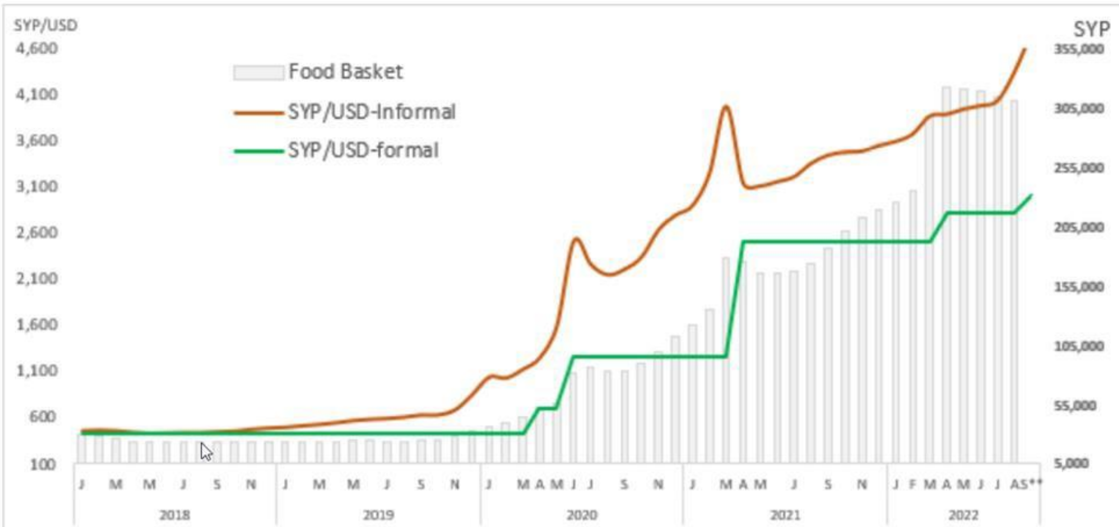
Source: WFP MARKET PRICE WATCH BULLETIN for December 2022, Issue 96

Syria's compounded economic crisis (2019-2022)



Source: Whole of Syria Food Security Sector

Exchange rates (formal (official) and informal) and food price trends



Source: WFP Syria, October 2022

Yemen

Situation and evolution

IPC/CH updated analysis indicated that, for the period October to December 2022, approximately 17 million people or over half of the population analysed in Yemen, were experiencing high levels of Acute Food Insecurity (IPC/CH phase 3) and Emergency (IPC/CH phase 4). The primary concern was the 6.1 million people classified in IPC/CH phase 4, one phase away from starvation. This analysis update indicated a slight improvement in the food security situation compared with the previous projection (June to December 2022), and showed that while IPC/CH phase 5, Catastrophe, has been averted, more than half of the population remains acutely food insecure – with over 6 million people still classified in IPC/CH phase 4, Emergency. When comparing the number of people facing acute food insecurity between January-May 2022 (17.4 million) with the updated projection of 17 million, it can be considered that very limited change of the food security situation will occur by the beginning of 2023 compared to the end of 2022. The IPC/CH analysis taking place in March 2023 for the areas under control of the Internationally Recognised Government (IRG) of Yemen will inform the change in the food security situation (IPC/CH analysis for the areas under control of the de facto authorities will be conducted in May/June 2023 after Ramadan).

Yemen remains one of the most food insecure countries in the world. For nearly a decade – even before the war – more than half of the population has consistently been food insecure, due to structural instability aggravated by human-induced factors and climate change. This analysis, therefore, emphasises that the slight improvement is a temporary reprieve and further efforts need to be put in place to sustain and completely reverse this trend that has been persistent for over a decade.

Prior to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the national average price of wheat had already risen by 246.7% from 2014 to September 2021. Between January and October 2022, wheat flour prices increased by another 67% in the areas under IRG control , while it increased by 12% in the areas under control of Ansar Alllah. Since January 2023, the price of wheat has continued to increase, in both IRG area (+6%) and in the Ansar Allah-controlled areas (+7%). As the wheat imports continue, the problem for the most vulnerable is not availability but affordability of wheat.

The Yemen crisis is still significantly underfunded, with the 2022 appeal funded 53.6% only, the lowest coverage of a Yemen appeal since the start of the crisis. Out of USD 4.271 billion required, USD 2.285 billion were provided. In 2023, the HRP needs USD 4.34 billion for implementation, an increase of 1.7%. For the food security sector, however, the request has increased close to 5% to USD 2.2 billion.

The funding gap is forcing the World Food Programme (WFP) to further cut food rations. Despite the important amount of funding received in 2022 and the efforts to prioritise assistance to the populations facing the highest needs, WFP is still constrained to distribute reduced rations equivalent to 65% of the standard food basket, providing around 1 100 kilocalories per person per day.

Reduced rations and suspension of assistance are dangerously becoming the new norm. The food security actors inevitably will no longer meet the standards of humanitarian food assistance. The result could be malnutrition and further impoverishment.

Drivers

The economic crisis (effects of low incomes, depreciation of the Yemeni currency and irregular or non-payment of salaries of civil servants), persistence of pockets of conflict, reduced access to basic services and low humanitarian food assistance, are the key drivers of food insecurity. The Russian war of aggression against Ukraine is also contributing to the deterioration of the food security situation in Yemen. Yemen is 90% dependent on food imports, with 46% of wheat coming from Russia and Ukraine.

Restrictions and obstructions of access to services and assistance are major aggravating factors for the functioning of the humanitarian response and the private sector, hampered by limited volumes of imports. The UN-brokered truce (started on 2 April 2022 and renewed until 2 October 2022) led to a reduction of hostilities and a temporary increase of fuel imports allowed into the areas under control of the de facto authorities. Fortunately, the expiration of the truce agreement did not affect the fuel supply into Yemen.

Ongoing interventions

ECHO interventions

- DG ECHO allocated an initial amount of EUR 136 million to Yemen in 2023, compared to EUR 170 million in 2022. In 2022 approximately 80% of the budget contributed directly (food security, 34%) and indirectly (health and nutrition 21%, basic needs/Multipurpose Cash Assistance 16%, WASH 6% and DRR 3.5%) to food security outcomes. DG ECHO provides aid mainly through cash and in-kind deliveries.
- The EU is a leading actor on diplomacy and coordinated humanitarian advocacy. The fifth Senior Official Meeting (SOM) on Yemen will take place in Brussels on 23 May 2023. It will take stock of the current humanitarian situation in Yemen, assess its evolution since the fourth SOM on 23 June 2022, and identify recommendations to address the challenges to continue delivering collectively principled aid, including vis a vis the food insecurity.

Other actors' main interventions

- USAID/BHA: An initial allocation of USD 400 million will support WFP, which is significantly below the USD 950 million which were allocated in 2022 alone (including a significant part of food in-kind).

Needs and opportunities

- Improve the prioritisation of assistance to ensure greater coverage for the most vulnerable groups.
- Continue to play a leading role in coordination and advocacy for the respect of IHL, principled aid delivery and increased assistance to Yemen.
- Advocate both internally to other Commission services and externally to donors for increased engagement on Yemen.
- Develop specific strategies to operate in contexts of high inflation and depreciation (e.g., flexible programming, market monitoring and contingency planning).
- Strengthen the humanitarian cash and shock-responsive social protection (SRSP) nexus, as well as livelihood support and diversification, inter-sectoral programming and monitoring and early warning systems.

- ## Latin America and Caribbean

Central America

Guatemala

Situation and evolution

The situation in Guatemala is particularly worrisome as food insecurity has known a 6-fold increase since 2013, with 24 % of it's the population food insecure. In addition, around 47% of children under 5 are being affected by chronic malnutrition (UNICEF). In the last four years, over 75 000 cases of acute malnutrition have been registered in the country, and one in two children suffer chronic malnutrition. These data include the last 37% increase of acute malnutrition cases compared to 2021, while the seasonal hunger period has just begun. (Ministry of Health, March 2023). This is the highest rate in Latin America and the Caribbean and is the 6th highest rate of chronic malnutrition or stunting in the world (WFP, August 2022).

According to IPC/CH, the number of people experiencing high level of acute food insecurity (IPC/CH phase 3 or above) and in need of assistance was estimated at 3.2 million people (30% decrease from September 2022) for the period leading up to February 2023. WFP estimates that more than 100 000 Guatemalans are in IPC/CH phase 4 (WFP, October 2022). Children are particularly vulnerable. The different projections didn't take into account the impact of meteorological hazards, as from April to mid-October 2022 more than 4.8 million people were affected by consecutive rains (Some 851 000 people in Guatemala have been affected by Tropical Storm Julia).

Drivers

The main drivers are high food and transport prices, the ripple effects of the Russian invasion of Ukraine causing high prices in fertilisers (an increase of 85% since 2021), the depletion of basic grain reserves, the loss of jobs and income and the COVID-19 pandemic consequences.

The purchasing power of households continues to be negatively affected by international trends. In June 2022, the highest year-on-year inflation in eleven years (7.5%) was reported. The inflationary trend is even higher in Alta and Baja Verapaz, with 9.7%, and in Huehuetenango and Quiché, with 9.2%. The prices of white corn, black beans and rice are the highest recorded since 1998 (Ministry of Agriculture). Basic Food Basket data reveal that the price of edible oil increased 31.4%, compared to the previous year. The National Statistics Institute (INE) indicates that a family of five needs USD 427.90 per month to purchase the Basic Food Basket, while the average minimum wage is USD 267. 40% of the households spent more than 50% of their income on food.

Honduras

Situation and evolution

According to IPC/CH, over 2.6 million people (28% of the population analysed) are in Crisis or worse (IPC/CH phase 3 or above), requiring urgent action. Of these people, at least 1.9 million are in Crisis (IPC/CH phase 3) and 353 000 in Emergency (IPC/CH phase 4).

Inflation has caused a deterioration in the purchasing power of the population, which currently depends mainly on purchases due to the annual lean season. Food prices increased 6.3% and transport 3.6%. The price of the Basic Food Basket increased 5% since December 2021, with a 68% increase of maize, 23% of beans and 15% of oil.

With a seasonal decline in employment options in rural areas, access to food has been reduced, especially for the poorest households. They are reducing the number of daily meals, increasing the use of credit or third-party food support, and selling productive assets, increasing the possibility that they will be classified in Crisis (IPC/CH phase 3).

Drivers

Food insecurity is stemming from structural and systemic deficiencies, causing increasing poverty rates, linked to violence and climate change (26% population is at high climate risk). The connection between food insecurity, climate, and violence on the one side and (forced) migration on the other has been highlighted by some stakeholders in the region.

Indeed, the aggravated food insecurity is mainly caused by an accumulation of impacts and simultaneous shocks, including El Niño, consecutive droughts, hurricanes Eta, Iota and Julia, coffee rust, socio-economic impact of COVID-19, ongoing inflation, violence, and the impact of the war on Ukraine.

Ongoing interventions

ECHO interventions

- Since 1994, DG ECHO has allocated EUR 281 million to Central America, of which EUR 45 million were allocated to food security and nutrition, and EUR 91 million were allocated to Disaster Preparedness.

- In its current projects, DG ECHO focusses on the Dry Corridor, and particularly the areas mostly affected by the recent hurricanes. It provides food assistance and short to medium-term livelihood recovery, while helping to build resilience within relevant nexus strategies. At the same time DG ECHO raises awareness on the prevailing food crisis through FSN information systems and a coordinated response.

- At the end of 2022, EUR 5 million was allocated from operational reserves to Central America in order to respond to the current crisis.

- Due to the rapid degradation of nutritional situation, nutritional data collection, surveillance and response will be also supported through new actions.

- DG ECHO supported close to 190 000 beneficiaries in Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua with direct cash transfer, vouchers, and in-kind assistance.

Other actors' main interventions:

The **European Union** is funding several development projects at regional level, which are related to food insecurity and resilience building in the sector:

- EUR 6 million are allocated for the Information Systems Program for the Resilience of Food and Nutrition Security in the SICA Region (PROGRESAN-SICA), generating information for the development of public strategies and policies, with a focus on resilience of food and nutrition security (SAN). It is currently funded under the Climate Resilience of rural households in the Dry Corridor and managed as a component of the national programme in Nicaragua and ends in October 2023.
- EUR 6 million are allocated to the AGRO-INNOVA action for the adaptability of agro-forestry systems in the Central American Dry Corridor, aiming to enhance local capacities in 6 countries on water harvest, bio-supplies production, forestry nurseries, planting nutrition and provision of drought-resistant varieties.

The European Union is funding several food-related development projects in Nicaragua:

- The Boosting Rural and urban Economy in Times of Crisis and Beyond (BOOST) programme, to sustain value chains related to the School Meals Programme , reducing poverty and fostering the economic empowerment of women, with a budget of EUR 15 million.
- The Climate Resilience of Rural Households in the Dry Corridor (Dry Corridor), to strengthen the policy framework on climate change adaptation at regional level and a shock responsiveness mechanism, with a budget of EUR 13 million.

The European Union is funding three food-related projects in Guatemala:

- PRO-RESILIENCE, an integral approach to build resilience in communities vulnerable to food insecurity and climate shocks, called, implemented by WFP with a budget of EUR 15 million.
- Support to the National Strategy for Prevention of Chronic Malnutrition implemented by UNICEF, for an amount of EUR 15 million.
- Support to the primary health system to fight chronic malnutrition with an amount of EUR 20 million.

In addition, the EU will adopt a new programme with a total budget of EUR 14 million, aiming at strengthening the budgetary execution at institutional level and public policy implementation capacities of the Ministries who are responsible for the fight against malnutrition. It will also strengthen the institutional capacity of the Ministry of Finance which supports them. Furthermore, the EU will strengthen food security in the most vulnerable regions of Guatemala and promote income generation, through the development of sustainable and climate-resilient agriculture, as well as alternative economic activities in rural areas.

WFP signed an agreement with the Ministry of Social Development (MIDES) to strengthen the Ministry's actions in food and nutrition security.

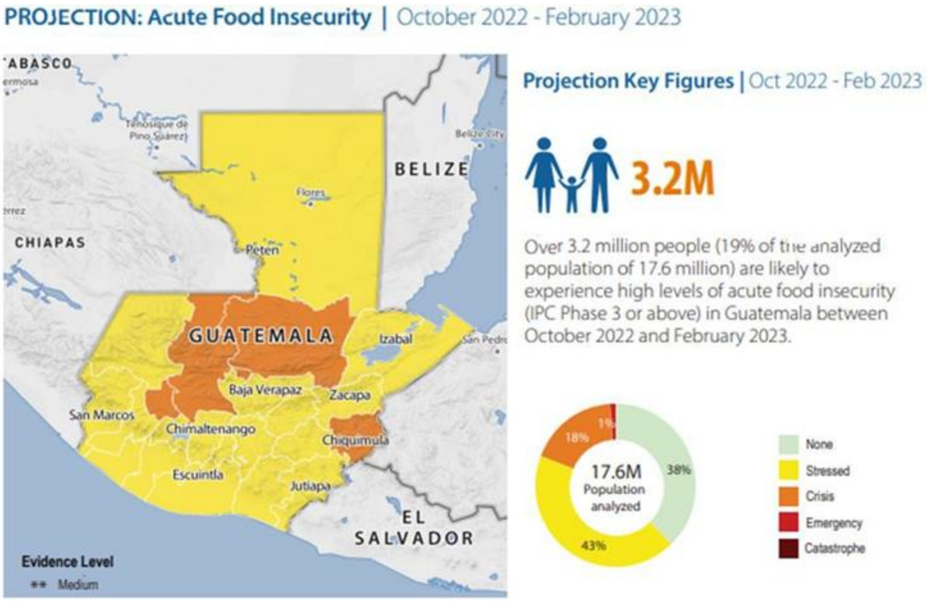
USAID announced funding to address food security and resilience in the LAC region.

- In Fiscal Year 2022, USD 21.8 million dedicated for USAID/BHA food assistance operations in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala. Activities include emergency food assistance, via cash transfers and multipurpose cash assistance, agricultural interventions, and livelihood support. Partners include WFP (El Salvador), World Vision and CRS (Guatemala), ADRA and CRS in Honduras.
- At the same time, nearly USD 92 million of emergency food assistance and related humanitarian programming, such as nutrition, health, and protection, as well as water, sanitation, and hygiene interventions has been announced for El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras (of which USD 87.5 million in emergency funding and USD 4.3 million in early recovery, risk reduction and resilience).

Needs and opportunities

- The food security crisis in Central America remains severely underfunded. Funding gaps persist in the region.
- Partners are requested to further prioritise and target the most vulnerable individuals.
- Continue to advocate with other services and donors for an increased engagement in Central America's Dry Corridor.
- The Food security and Nutrition Information system support in Central America was recently finalised. No new support from the EU or other donors is foreseen for the moment, and this in a significantly changing context due to political and violent crises and the ongoing impact of the conflict in Ukraine.

- Improving the operationalisation of the nexus for shock-responsive social protection and Anticipatory action, as well as the coordination between DP programs, Euroclima and resilience building programs.



Source: GUATEMALA: IPC/CH Acute Food Insecurity Snapshot | March 2022 - February 2020[9]

[9] https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Guatemala_AcuteFoodInsec_2022Mar2023Feb_Snapshot_English.pdf

[10] https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Honduras_Acute_Food_Insec_2021Dec2022Aug_Snapshot_English.pdf

[11] https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Honduras_Acute_Food_Insec_2021Dec2022Aug_Snapshot_English.pdf

South America and the Caribbean

Colombia

Situation and evolution

In 2021, 39.3% of Colombians (19.6 million people) were below the monetary poverty line with a monthly income per capita of only 354 000 Colombian pesos (EUR 80.5). Furthermore, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) projects that in Colombia total poverty will be 1.7% higher than 2021 due to inflation. Extreme poverty affects disproportionately ethnic minorities, including indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities, usually located in former conflict zones with little state presence. About 7.3 million Colombian residents were estimated to have food security related humanitarian needs in 2022 (last IPC/CH data are under validation for the moment), while moderate and severe food insecurity has been affecting 42% of the resident population (21.4 million), with severe food insecurity having slightly improved since the end of 2021 (FAO-WFP).

As of July 2022, 75.7% of Colombian households ate three meals a day compared to 85.5% before the COVID-19 pandemic (DANE); 23.2% of households ate twice a day (30% in July 2021) and 1.1% only once. Moreover, 10.8% of children under 5 years of age suffer from chronic malnutrition. In addition to Colombians, nearly 1.3 million Venezuelan migrants (out of 2.3 million) are food insecure. Food insecurity among migrants and refugees is aggravated by significant levels of internal displacement and accelerating food inflation.

Due to the combined effect of inflation stemming from COVID-19 related restrictions and the crisis in Ukraine, as of November 2022 prices were nearly 50% higher compared to the previous year, as indicated by the official annual inflation rate of food and non-alcoholic beverages, estimated at 27%. Colombia imports an estimated 75% of its fertiliser (approximately half from Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine), and approximately 28% of its food commodities. Increasing food prices and shortages of agricultural inputs have a significant negative impact on low-income communities in the country, such as Venezuelan migrants and refugees.

Drivers

Persistent violence among non-state armed groups and recurring natural disasters in Colombia (554 500 people have been affected by 3 700 events of natural disasters as of November 2022) continue to cause internal displacement and limit Colombians' ability to access crops, livelihoods, essential goods, and services, thus exacerbating food insecurity and nutrition issues among vulnerable households. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic and related mitigation measures lead to reduced access to health and protection services, worsening an already dire food insecurity situation.

In addition, approximately 2.48 million Venezuelan migrants and refugees have sought refuge in Colombia, along with more than 980 000 Colombian returnees. These factors have strained local services and increased humanitarian needs, including food, health, livelihoods, nutrition, protection, shelter, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), not only among migrants, refugees, and returnees, but also host communities in both rural and urban areas. Furthermore, other aggravating factors are worsening the current situation, such as loss of agricultural livelihoods and reduction of agricultural productive capacity due to the increase in the costs of production (15-35%).

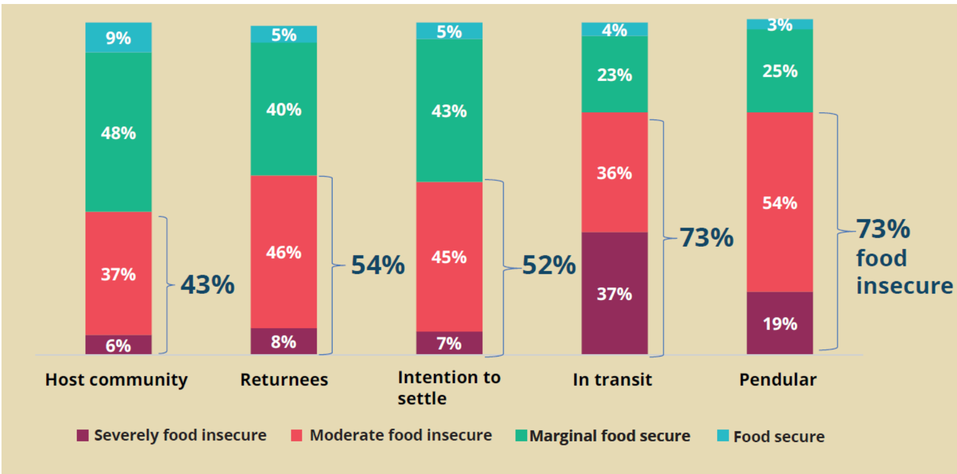
Ongoing interventions

ECHO interventions

- DG ECHO interventions focus on the immediate risks of the most vulnerable and affected populations on prioritised sectors like protection, health, education in emergencies and nutrition. Those are sectors where DG ECHO has a real added value in complementarity and coordination to other donors. Food security interventions are prioritised under rapid response mechanisms.
- Over EUR 84 million has been allocated by DG ECHO to the Food Security Sector in Colombia between 1994 and 2022, representing 23% of total allocations. Food assistance remains greatly underfunded in both the HRP (funding gap 68%) and RMRP (funding gap 69%).

Needs and opportunities

- Need to improve the triple nexus with EU Delegation and Member States for a more holistic response to the needs (from humanitarian protection, health, EiE, response to economic inclusion, support from social protection systems and documentation from development programs).
- Expanding food security and nutrition assessment to also include Colombian populations nationwide, also in remote areas.
- Improve DG ECHO-funded project CASH response.



Food insecurity levels (%) by population group (WFP, Oct. 2022)

Haiti

Situation and evolution

The number of people requiring urgent humanitarian assistance in the country has continued to climb (almost double) in the last years from 2.8 million people in 2018 to 5.2 million in 2023, nearly half of the Haitian population. Haiti is facing three concurrent and interconnected crises: ramping insecurity related to gang violence, economic collapse, and a cholera epidemic. The Humanitarian Needs Overview 2023 (HNO) reports another major increase of needs in all sectors.

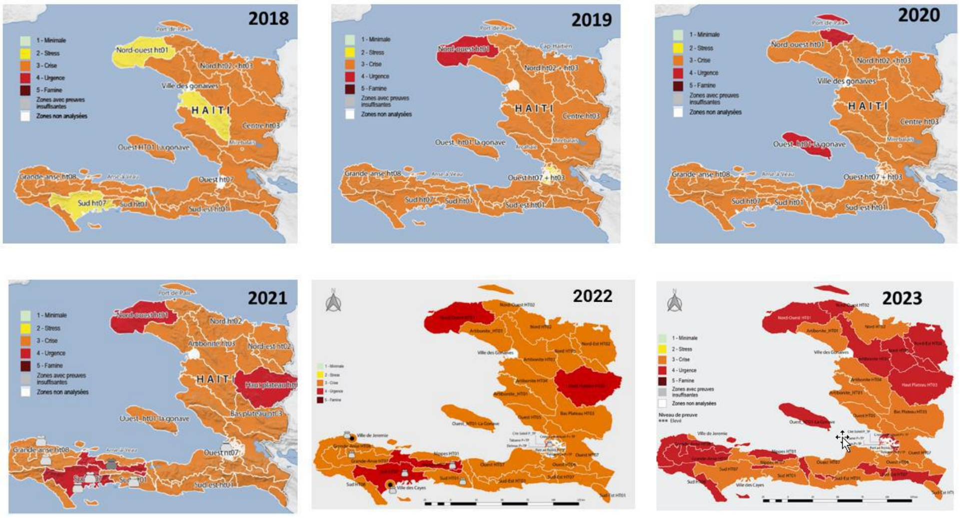
In Haiti, according to last IPC/CH analysis (March 2023), about 4.9 million people out of the 9.9 million people analysed are said to experience high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC/CH phase 3 or above) for the period from March to June 2023. Of the total 4.9 million people, 1.8 million are estimated to be in emergency (IPC/CH phase 4), up from 1.7 million in the September 2022 analysis. The number of people in crisis (IPC/CH phase 3) has also slightly increased from 3.04 million to 3.08 million in the recent analysis.

Increasing insecurity and gangs 'territorial control' prevent household access to livelihood opportunities and markets. Haiti imports 70 % of its food commodities. Furthermore, Haiti registered its fourth consecutive year of negative growth rate. In parallel, the rise in living costs driven by the inflation and fuel shortages has turned out in 31% of the population living on less than USD 2.15 a day. Across the country, availability of fuel remains extremely limited, resulting in a heightened demand in the parallel market and causing prices to jump to more than 160 % above the official price. Meanwhile, by March 2023 the exchange rate reached a record of 152 HTG/USD, rising 50% year-on-year. Given Haiti's import dependence, the cost of staple foods has risen with the depreciation of the local currency gourde (HTG). Imported food prices in December were 60% higher than 2021 and more than 120% higher than the five-year average. The violence has cut off access to markets, including maintaining a chokehold on the capacity to import and distribute fuel in Haiti. This has driven costs and limited access to essential supplies, increasing the number of people in extreme poverty. Trade, agriculture, and business activities have been disrupted eroding resilience, livelihoods systems and coping mechanisms of communities. In 2023, 4.9 million people will face IPC/CH 3 or higher.

Drivers

Haitians must contend with collapsing provision of basic services, cholera, high prices and shortages of food, fuel, and other basic needs. A mass exodus is underway with repatriations in 2022 reaching 176 777 people, while over 155 000 people remain internally displaced. The economic deterioration, fuelled by the political impasse, insecurity and an increase in prices of major food products in international markets, continues to worsen the cost of living, with 4.9 million Haitians projected to be food insecure in 2023.

Evolution of food security in Haiti from 2018 to nowadays



Source: CNSA, 2023

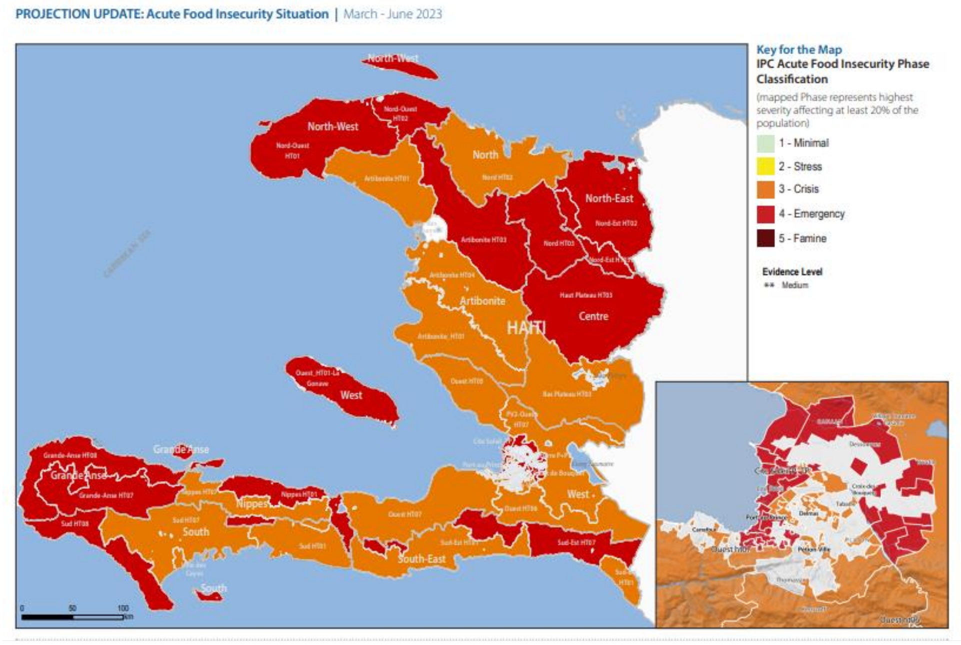
Ongoing interventions

ECHO interventions

- The 2022 HIP first allocation of EUR 6 million was mainly devoted to respond to protection, health, and education needs and priorities. In May 2022, a EUR 5 million top up was approved to provide emergency food assistance, such as the provision of cash for food, food vouchers, and in-kind food assistance to communities under the most acute food needs (IPC/CH 4). The strategy included response in urban areas and complemented the WFP's Social Protection program.
- In October 2022, an EUR 6.5 million package has been allocated to Haiti, from the de-committed funds of the European Development Fund for humanitarian food assistance in the most vulnerable countries in Africa, Caribbean, and the Pacific. The actions are focusing on areas with identified population on IPC/CH 5 and high concentration of population in IPC/CH 4 in order to prevent a further deterioration of the food crisis.

Needs and opportunities

- Requests from partner organizations for funding in 2023 added up to EUR 44 million, while available resources of ECHO for Haiti amount to EUR 8.5 million. Hence, additional resources are urgently required to address the evolving critical needs in the country.
- Advocating with other services and donors for increased engagement in Haiti is necessary.
- Promote additional nutritional assessments to have sufficient information of the nutrition status of children under the age of 5.
- Concerns related to the accelerated devaluation of the currency against the dollar and the high cost of living have a great impact on the amount of cash transfers.
- Maximising nexus with the EU Delegation to improve coordination via a joint analysis of needs to promote complementarities at geographical level, be support shock responsive, and ensure the implementation of social protection and anticipatory actions.



Source: IPC, March 2023

Venezuela

Situation and evolution

The estimated number of food insecure people ranges between 14.4 and 18.5 million, according to figures from HumVenezuela. 80.6% of households (23.1 million people) cannot buy quality food in sufficient quantities. 13.4 million people (46.7%) have lost their source of income and 5 million people (17.7%) exhausted their means of life.

Venezuelan migrants and refugees displaced abroad amount to 7.1 million as of January 2023, with forecasts for 1.56 million who will be targeted for food security responses in 2023 (Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan, RMRP - Plataforma de Coordinación Interagencial para Refugiados y Migrantes, R4V – 2023).

Venezuela is importing 75% of the food it needs and is therefore affected by shortages on the international market. Additionally, the World Bank assessment indicated that inflation stands at 155%. In 2021, the extreme poverty rate and the poverty rate were at 76.6% and 95.4% respectively (National Household Survey). There is a deficit of 95% of the minimum wage (USD 23) in relation to the basic basket of June 2022, which was USD 459.84, showing an increase of 5.05% compared to May 2022. Around USD 15 are needed per day to cover food costs, while the minimum salary is estimated at USD 16 per month.

Drivers

The war in Ukraine added to pre-existing political and economic factors that have weakened the livelihoods of the population, exacerbating the crisis. From 2014 to 2020, the GDP shows an accumulated reduction of 74%, thus a significant decrease in potential production capacity and productivity in the country (ENCOVI).

Russian food import dependency and fuel scarcity affected 1.2 million tonnes of wheat and 80% of fertilisers imported. Lack of financing and sufficient income, increased fuel prices, as well as limited access to seeds also have an impact.

Increasing insecurity and violence due to the conflicts between armed groups continue to affect food insecurity. Lastly, extreme weather has increased flooding in recent years, resulting in loss of food crops. Climatic variations have also altered cycles, making it difficult to take advantage of rainy periods for irrigation and the water public service has severe deficiencies.

Ongoing interventions

ECHO interventions

- EUR 20.1 million allocated inside Venezuela in 2022 for all HIP priorities under the initial allocation, EUR 6 million under a second (Operational Reserve) allocation and EUR 30 million (new funds) allocated to respond to basic needs inside Venezuela and to Venezuelan migrants' acute needs outside Venezuela). DG ECHO is funding WFP operations implemented in schools in Venezuela, which focus on food assistance. Other key partners such as NRC also work with schools, complementing EiE with food security interventions.

Other actors' main interventions

- In a true nexus approach, the EU continues to support food availability through the promotion of the development of associative schemes. Through a second project, they are also supporting family farming through the reinforcement of food production capacities.

Needs and opportunities

- The funding received for the HRP Venezuela (in-country) 2021 and 2020 covered less than 50% of the required funds.
- The lack of official data to support the humanitarian crisis (particularly on the ongoing food and nutrition crisis) hinders the visibility of the situation and the access to funds to meet the needs of the most vulnerable. Thus, DG ECHO needs to make the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela more visible and increase advocacy with other donors, including the adoption of a nexus approach.
- The work of FAO on food production and support to family farming gives a real opportunity for the nexus approach, in combination with ongoing DG ECHO funded EiE and the food security response project throughout school feeding.
- The impossibility of developing cash interventions in Venezuela for a year and a half prevents reaching a greater number of people in need.

Asia and Pacific

Afghanistan

Situation and evolution

Food security continues to remain at critical levels in Afghanistan. The Sept. 2022 Global Network against Food Crisis (GNFC) Hunger Hotspots report includes Afghanistan amongst the highest hotspots of concern with catastrophic conditions. While humanitarian food assistance averted a famine, it is not sufficient to allow people graduating out of extreme severity conditions. Due to the simultaneous effects of winter and the peak of the lean season, sustained high food prices, reduced income, and unemployment, 19.9 million people are in IPC/CH phase 3 and above, of which 6 million are in IPC/CH 4 during November 2022 – March 2023, representing 46% of the population. All 34 provinces remain in IPC/CH phase 3 and above, with 14 in IPC/CH phase 4. The areas of highest concern include Badghis, Ghor, Daykundi, Badakhshan, Bamyan, and Faryab provinces.

The next IPC/CH analysis initially planned during the first quarter of 2023 is delayed and will be published in April 2023. The delay and the limited participation of women enumerators will affect the ability to analyse the pre-lean season period with an expected overlap of the pre-harvest and post-harvest periods. A more granular analysis and continuous monitoring of provinces in IPC/CH 4 are needed to timely identify pockets of IPC/CH 5 and worsening trends.

The Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for 2023 estimates that 28.3 million people (two thirds of the 43.2 million Afghanistan's population) will need urgent humanitarian assistance. The number of people in need in 2023 increases by 16% from 24.4 million in 2022 and by 54% from 18.4 million in 2021.

The number of people targeted by HFA under HRP 2023 is 21.18 million. The HFA requirement is unchanged from 2022 (USD 2.6 billion – 57% of total HRP 2023) thanks to the stabilization on global food commodities prices.

Drivers

The HRP 2023 highlights that after the Taliban take-over in August 2021, a new era started characterized by the exclusion of women from public life, economic challenges, and inflation driven by global commodity shocks and a collapse of the public health/education system as a result of the suspension of direct international development assistance, which previously accounted for 75% of public expenditures.

In addition to the man-made causes, drought and localized rapid on-set disasters have been major causes of widespread food insecurity and increasing rural and urban poverty

After months of high volatility, during the second part of 2022 the exchange rate of AFG has been stabilising, regaining the same level of March 2023 (87 AFN = 1 USD).

WFP March Price bulletin reports that the cost of a food basket (USD 79) and fuel has been reducing steadily since mid-2022, regaining the average of the same period last year but still higher that two years ago. Despite a stabilization of prices, inflation continues to affect household capacity to meet basic needs. In March 2023, the average price of a litre of diesel was 24% higher than two years previously.

Employment opportunities and daily wages have been reducing in the past couple of years. WFP observes a seasonal bouncing of unskilled labour/wheat terms of trade by 22% YoY, while still lower by 16% compared to its two-year average.

High-levels of unemployment and sustained inflation have driven the average household's debt to increase six-fold since 2019, and by 44% for urban households since 2021 (HNO).

Due to poor pasture conditions and high fodder prices, livestock owners' fodder stocks are likely below normal. Livestock body conditions and losses have been aggravated by exceptional cold waves during January 2023 and difficult access to fodder.

According to March 2023 FAO Crop Prospects and Food Situation, the 2022 wheat production was equivalent to 3.8 million MT, thereby lower than in 2021 (3.9 million MT) and than the 5-year average (4.4 million MT).

Afghanistan has an INFORM Risk Index of 8.1, making it the fourth most at-risk country for humanitarian crises and disasters.

Ongoing interventions

ECHO interventions

- In 2022, DG ECHO allocated a total EUR 189 million in the region. Almost one third of the funding has been allocated to food assistance. The HIP 2023 is under allocation, with a dedicated EUR 89 million. The EU is an important player in Afghanistan, as it is one of the very few donors who has maintained a physical presence in the country. The DG ECHO field office has never interrupted its activities and continues to carry out monitoring missions across the country.

Other actor's main interventions

- According to the OCHA FTS, the 2022 HRP was 75% funded.
- As of March 2023, OCHA FTS, still only 7.5 % of 2023 HRP is funded by the Asian Development Bank and the USA as first donors.
- The Food Security and Agriculture Sector, requiring USD 2.6 billion shows the lowest contribution with only USD 27 million covered, an alarmingly low percentage (1%), considering the massive needs and the risk of famine should humanitarian food assistance be discontinued.

Needs and opportunities

- Because of the ban of women working for NGOs, securing both physical and humanitarian access to all population in need without discrimination remains the major challenge for the delivery of humanitarian food assistance.
- USD 2.6 billion are needed in 2023 to assist 21.2 million people across Afghanistan with HFA and livelihood support (HRP 2023).
- To continue to be able to address the most urgent needs in 2023, WFP needs USD 2.2 billion with a gap of USD 795 million between March and August 2023. In March 2023, due to severe funding constraints, WFP reduced rations to IPC/CH 4 households from 75% to 50% of a household's basic food needs. WFP urgently requires USD 93 million to avoid 9 million people being cut off from HFA in April, including 2 million people in IPC/CH 4 areas.
- Alongside humanitarian food assistance, continuing the support small holder farmers and herders in rural areas and destitute households in urban areas remains a fundamental pillar of DGECHO funding priorities in 2023.

Myanmar

Situation and evolution

In Myanmar, reliable data and analysis has always been limited by restrictions imposed by authorities on the implementation of food security and nutrition assessments. After the military coup in 2021, restrictions on humanitarian operations tightened, and outreach and assessments have become practically impossible. However, since 2022 analysis has been benefiting from additional sources like REACH, the Multi-Sector Needs Analysis (MSNA) and joint Food Security and Livelihood Assessment (FSLA) by FAO-WFP.

While not identified as a hunger hotspot because of insufficient data and assessment done according to standard methodology, the GNAFS outlook September 2022 considers Myanmar's food-security situation of very high concern and includes Myanmar among the countries requiring close monitoring due to the deterioration of a multi-faceted protracted crisis.

According to the UNHCR's Myanmar Displacement Overview on 20 March 2023, an estimated 1.755.400 internally displaced people (IDPs) were reported, including 1.427.400 people displaced since 1 February 2021. These more recent IDPs are in addition to the estimated 328 000 protracted IDPs including 130 000 Rohingya IDPs in central Rakhine and the 600 000 highly vulnerable stateless Rohingya (both in confined camps and villages) fully dependent on external assistance. However, considering the low return rate, and poor return perspective despite the government's camps closure strategy (i.e. forced return), it is expected that the majority of IDPs will not immediately return to their locations of origin.

HNO expects that the number of IDPs will almost double during 2023, reaching 2.7 million during the fourth quarter. Out of the 17.6 million of people in need (PiN) of humanitarian assistance, it is estimated that the overwhelming majority is in need of food (HFA) (86% - 15.2 million).

The FAO GIEWS Crop prospect and food situation quarterly report – March 2023 , lists Myanmar among the countries requiring external assistance for severe localized food insecurity.

The January 2023 FAO-WFP Data in Emergencies Monitor Brief (DIEM), based on an assessment done in Aug-Sept. 2022 using the Remote Consolidated Approach to Reporting Indicators of Food Security (r-CARI), warned about deteriorating trend with 15.2 million people food insecure (severe and moderate).

According to the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES), 29% of households are moderately or severely food insecure. One in two households had to rely on crisis and emergency coping mechanisms. The use of emergency coping strategies (high risk jobs, migration, selling last working animals, mortgaged/sold house or land) increased from 15% to 21%.

Food consumption scores deteriorated from 19% of households experiencing insufficient food consumption in August/September 2021 to 24% in August/September 2022. The proportion of households with insufficient diets increased from 24% in August/September 2021 to 26% in August/September 2022 in rural areas, and from 9% to 19% in urban areas.

The states of Chin, Kayah, Kayin, Rakhine and Sagaing had the worst food security outcomes across all indicators.

Drivers

Conflict remains the main driver of food insecurity and lack of access to basic services and protection concerns. The de facto authorities extended the country's state of emergency for six-months and imposed martial law in 47 Townships across the country on 2 February.

Access to food and basic needs is particularly critical for both new and protracted IDPs. While needs have increased 14-fold from 2020 to 2022 because of conflict and displacement, humanitarian funding has only increased by 51% over the same period and by 22% from 2021 to 2022.

The FAO GIEWS Crop prospect and food situation of March 2023 indicates that the total 2022 rice production is forecast at 23.7 [1]million tonnes, about 10% below the five-year average level. This is mostly due to the limited use of agricultural inputs, resulting from increased prices for fertilizers. Fertilizer prices in July 2022 were between 91% and 75% higher compared to July 2021. Additionally, despite low farm-gate prices, retail prices increased, affecting particularly the net consumers in urban areas. Furthermore, the FAO-WFP Shocks, agricultural livelihoods and food security monitoring report from June 2022 indicate that half of the interviewed farmers reduced the area planted. Retrenchment is slightly more pronounced among rice and cash crop producers.

Transport and logistic constraints due to high costs of fuel and road insecurity are additional factors of domestic agriculture production decline.

The FAO-WFP DIEM of January 2023 reports that 47% of livestock producers experienced a decrease in herd/flock size, particularly among swine and poultry producers. The incidence of livestock diseases decreased, and market access improved, the increased unavailability and high cost of animal feeds may have a potential knock-on effect of grain substitution in livestock feed.

As of November 2022, the Kyat has depreciated by 54% against USD YoY. Retail food prices have risen steeply since the coup, influenced by the global economic crisis and due to the disruption of transportation routes, insecurity, and market non-functionality.

The FAO GIEWS Food price monitoring and analysis bulletin - March 2023 warns that prices of “Emata” continued to increase, reaching a record high in February (+125% YoY).

There was a sharp food price increase in February 2023; rice +12% month -on -month and fuel +30% year -on -year.

WFP’s September 2022 market monitoring indicates that the average cost of the food basket has increased by 64% since September 2021. WFP also observed very high differences between States, influenced by local transport and security conditions.

The January 2023 World Bank Economic monitor reports a mixed picture with the construction sector showing signs of recovery and businesses in main cities returning to a relative normality but global commodity prices, Kyat depreciation, increasing transport costs, electricity outages and internet disruptions remains a major challenge for agriculture and manufacturing sectors.

WB estimates that the public debt has risen above 60% of GDP. Spending on critical public services has declined faster with combined, public health and education spending accounted for just 8.5% during the period between October 2021 and March 2022. Public debt is estimated to have increased by more than 20% of GDP since FY2019,

WB observes a movement of labour away from service and industries into agriculture and internal migration from cities to rural areas as coping mechanism to deal with job loss.

The WB indicates that the impacts of COVID-19 and the aftermath of the military coup have erased nearly a decade of poverty reduction progress with about 25 million people (40% of the population) now living below the national poverty line matching levels of poverty a decade ago.

Ongoing interventions

ECHO interventions

- In 2022, DG ECHO allocated a total of EUR 28.16 million including an External Assigned Revenue contribution of EUR 960 000 from Luxembourg. DG-ECHO contribution to food assistance was mainly through support of WFP operations (EUR 6.5 million).
- In 2023, DG ECHO has allocated a total of EUR 19.11 million including an External Assigned Revenue contribution of EUR 816 000 from Luxembourg. DG ECHO contribution to food assistance will be mainly through support of WFP operations (EUR 2.15 million) and FLER (First Line Emergency Response) consortium. WFP’s lifesaving programme needs USD 170 million. The pipeline will be break in the second half of 2023 due to funding shortfall of USD 61 million.

Other actor’s main interventions

- The food security sector of HRP 2022 was the largest, targeting 4 million people with a funding requirement of USD 286 million (incl. urban assistance). According to OCHA Financial Tracking Service (FTS) the 2022 HRP is funded with only 41.5% of requirements received as of December. DG-ECHO with USD 28.16 million is the fourth major contributor. This illustrates the drastic aggravation of the crisis in terms of scale and actual needs, along with a dramatically low funding.

- In 2022, Food Security Cluster (FSC) partners reached 3.5 million people, 86% of what initially targeted. Due to access constraints and underfunding, the humanitarian food assistance (HFA) was partial, not sufficiently integrated with other sectors assistance and limited in duration.
- In 2023, the food security sector remains the largest one, with USD 192.4 million requirements, despite the handing over of the urban caseload (over half of 2022 target) to other funding mechanisms, illustrating the increase in conflict-affected populations and related targeting. While WFP has already secured funding from major donors, they have no additional significant contribution in sight and already expect a pipeline break at the end of August for relief assistance. Food security is targeting 2.1 million people in 2023, while 15.2 million are in need of assistance.

Needs and opportunities

- Significant humanitarian needs will continue throughout 2023, including support to critical food needs of both protracted IDPs and newly displaced populations. For these two categories, food needs are only a component of their uncovered basic needs and services. Food assistance will have to be integrated and considered as part of a basic need approach, which poses significant coordination issues among major actors.
- Urban poor population and rural poor who depend on markets and assistance to meet their basic needs are also paying a heavy toll from the economic crisis. ECHO/INTPA are actively involved in advocating for the definition by all relevant actors of an urban strategy to rationalise the use of scarce resource and increase dedicated funding, not to the detriment of already poorly covered traditional humanitarian needs. The co-funded EU Nexus Response Mechanism is the vessel used to that end. The strategy drafting by WFP, UNICEF and UNOPS is progressing.

Pakistan

Situation and evolution

The September 2022 GNAFS outlook includes Pakistan amongst the very high concern hotspots, with the impact of the catastrophic floods during the 2022 monsoon season compounding the deterioration of the macroeconomic situation.

The flooding has affected 33 million people in almost one third of the country (116 districts) of which 72 districts were declared calamity-hit by the government.

Floods have driven up the number of food insecure people. As of 31 December 2022, according to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysis of 28 districts of Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Sindh, which traditionally have a high prevalence of food insecurity, malnutrition, and poverty, the estimated population in IPC/CH phase 3 and 4 increased from 5.96 million in the pre-flooding situation to 8.62 million in September-December 2022. In 18 flood affected districts of Sindh and Baluchistan, IPC/CH phases 3 and 4 population increased from 3.54 million in pre-flooding situation to 5.74 million (3.82 million in IPC/CH phase 3 and around 1.92 million in IPC/CH phase 4) post flooding (Sep-Dec 2022).

According to WFP SITREP March 2023, an additional 1.1 million people are at risk of slipping from the IPC phase 3 to phase 4, bringing the total number in IPC/CH phase 4 to 5.1 million.

According to OCHA updates, 7 million children and women need immediate nutrition services, with additional 80 000 severe acute malnourished children with medical complications.

Out of the total 154 districts of Pakistan, the IPC/CH Acute Food Insecurity analysis covers only 25 rural districts - 9 of Balochistan, 7 of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and 9 of Sindh, comprising around 8.6% of Pakistan's population.

FAO, WFP and the Food Security and Agriculture Working Group (FSAWG) are undertaking a Crop Food Security and Livelihood Assessment (CFSLA) and expand the IPC/CH analysis to 45 most affected districts of Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), and Sindh provinces, results are expected in early 2023.

Drivers

The flooding has come on top of a two-year macroeconomic deterioration with the unsustainable expansion of the fiscal and current-account deficit driven by the prolonged impact of COVID-19 and the ripple effects of the war in Ukraine. Pakistan imports about 75% of wheat from the Russian Federation and Ukraine.

Pakistan is facing one of the worst political and economic crises with high inflation, depleted foreign reserves and unstable USD exchange rates. The upsurge in international commodity prices in 2022 impacted the import bills resulting in a decline of the foreign reserves and high inflation on major basic commodities.

Inflation has been rising since the beginning of 2022. From January to May 2022 the YoY increase of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) has been around +13%, starting from June the CPI spiked reaching its peak in August (+27.2%) and stabilizing toward the end of 2022 with a +24.5%. Food and energy commodities recorded even higher increases. Compared to a year ago, in December 2022, prices of wheat were +55%, chicken +52%, eggs and pulse gram +51%, basmati rice +35%, and cooking oil +33%. After reaching a peak in July 2022, fuel prices have stabilised during the second part of 2022, yet recording 228 PKR/lt in December 2022 compared to 140 PKR/lt in December 2021. The approaching of Ramadhan and increased demand of food commodities is a source of concern and impact on inflation.

Overall increase in price of fertilizers of Urea (+25.5%) and DAP (+25.1%) from January 2022.

Ongoing interventions

DG ECHO interventions

- At the peak of the flooding, the European Commission's Copernicus Emergency Management Service was activated (EMSR629) to provide satellite maps on the areas. Nine EU Member States and one UCPM Participating State (i.e., Belgium, Sweden, Denmark, France, Austria, Greece, Slovenia, Germany, and Malta) have offered assistance to Pakistan under the UCPM.
- As of the end of 2022, DG ECHO has allocated EUR 30.8 million additional funding to assist the flood affected population in Pakistan, including DREF, SST, ALERT, HIP 2022 top-up and repurposed activities under the ongoing HIP 2021-22 grants.
- For HIP 2023, DG-ECHO has allocated EUR 16.5 million, of which roughly 50% to respond to un-met basic needs through multipurpose cash assistance.

Other actor's main interventions

- On 4 October 2022, UN OCHA and the Government of Pakistan presented in Geneva the revised Flash appeal for an amount of USD 816 million, aiming to provide relief to 9.5 million people. The food security and agriculture sector amounts at USD 269.4 million targeting 4 out of 14.5 million people in need of food assistance.
- As of January 2023, the Food Security and Agriculture Working group (FSAWG) reports that partners have reached around 7.57 million beneficiaries with food assistance and livelihood/agriculture support.

- The Government of Pakistan has reached 2.7 million flood affected households with PKR 25 000 cash assistance through the Benazir Income Support Programme.

Needs and opportunities

- Significant humanitarian needs will continue throughout 2023, requiring an update and prolonged funding of the Flood Response Plan (FRP), which is about to end in May 2023. The FSAWG reports a funding gap of USD 121 million or 45% for the food assistance and agriculture sectors of FRP.
- In additional to meet humanitarian needs, the Government of Pakistan faces the challenge of financing the post-floods recovery. The Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) estimates that over USD 16 billion will be required for reconstruction over the next 3 to 5 years (about 5% of GDP). A ‘Resilient Recovery, Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Framework’ (4RF) is being developed with assistance from the World Bank, the UNDP, the Asia Development Bank, and the EU.
- On 9 January 2023, UNSG Guterres and Pakistan’s Prime Minister Sharif co-hosted an international conference in Geneva to discuss the needs and seek support for recovery from the international community. Total pledges made amount to USD 9 billion, to support a structured process of recovery, monitor implementation and ensure transparency through an international partners support group.
- Despite critical issues on the targeting, limited fiscal space for shock responsiveness, and dependence on external financial support, BISP has proven to be capable to deliver first line assistance to millions of Pakistanis.
- How DG-ECHO can support a process for enhanced shock responsiveness shall be explored in coordination with other donors and within the current Disaster Preparedness country strategy. Similarly, given the critical gaps and needs the additional resources allocated to the HIP 2023 will help meet some of the critical gaps. Context, market functionalities, and access are conducive for an at-scale use of multi-purpose cash to meet food and other basic needs of affected populations

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