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DG ECHO Reports on food security

Release n° 6 – September 2023

Directorate-General for European Civil
Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations

*Civil Protection and
Humanitarian Aid*

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DG ECHO
Reports on food security

Release n° 6 – September 2023

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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)
GNFC	Global Network against Food Crises
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IFRC	International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
MdM	Médecins du Monde
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
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
SEAR	Solidarity and Emergency Aid Reserve
SMEB	Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket

Executive summary

Global food insecurity remains at record levels. According to the mid-year update of the Global Report on Food Crises (GRFC), published on 14 September, the situation remains similar to 2022, when 258 million people were considered to be acutely food insecure (IPC/CH phase 3 or above or equivalent) in 58 countries and territories, a historical maximum.

Whilst the 2023 mid-year update records 238 million food-insecure people, it only covers 48 countries, hence both figures cannot be directly compared. However, the prevalence of acute food insecurity among the populations analysed remains largely unchanged compared with 2022 (21% vs 22%), suggesting that the situation is not improving.

According to the latest Hunger Hotspots report, **nine countries are at risk of famine, the highest number recorded** since this report is published: Afghanistan, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, Yemen, Haiti, Burkina Faso, Mali and Sudan.

The **forecast for the remaining part of 2023 is bleak.** The consequences of **Russia's withdrawal of the BSGI** and its deliberate attacks on Ukraine's grain facilities will be more clearly felt globally and particularly by those more vulnerable in food affected countries. Russia's actions will likely drive up again global grain prices and will have an impact on how and how much food assistance is delivered by humanitarian organisations.

The consequences of conflict and unrest on food insecurity in Sudan and the Sahel will become starker. El Niño event will likely intensify weather extremes and will probably lead to a global reduction in the production of major staple crops, pushing food prices even higher.

Whilst funding for humanitarian food crises witnessed an increasing trend in the 2016-2021 period, **funding is not growing at the pace needed** to tackle the increasing scale and severity of food crises. According to the GNFC, humanitarian assistance per person facing high levels of acute food insecurity has decreased in the last years. The appeals for the main food crises remain severely underfunded, and the humanitarian system overly relies on only a limited number of donors.

Prospects for the remainder of 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 future¹.

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. DG ECHO allocates humanitarian food assistance based on observed needs, using the most appropriate modalities in each specific context. DG ECHO is also a major global advocacy actor.

In 2022, DG ECHO allocated around EUR 1,1 billion for humanitarian food and nutrition assistance, 90% more than in 2021, and more than twice the amount in 2020. In 2023, DG ECHO is working to maintaining appropriate levels of food assistance 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 needs and opportunities for action against food insecurity, which are put forth as recommendations.

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 Global Humanitarian Overview 2023.

This report provides detailed information about 27 countries and territories. These include the nine countries at risk of famine mentioned above, namely Afghanistan, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, Yemen, Haiti, Burkina Faso, Mali and Sudan. In addition to these, the report also covers Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Kenya, Uganda, Syria, Lebanon, the Central African Republic (CAR), Niger, Chad, Zimbabwe, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Central America, Venezuela, Colombia, Myanmar and Pakistan.

Economic shocks remain a prominent driver of hunger, exacerbated by 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.

Examples include Venezuela, which has the highest food inflation in the world at 403%, Lebanon, with a food inflation of 278% and a 98% currency depreciation since October 2019, or Zimbabwe with a food inflation over 100% and also a highly depreciated currency.

Climate change and related weather extremes remain a key driver of food insecurity in many of the countries under analysis. Consecutive years of drought have seriously deteriorated food security in the Horn of Africa despite above-average rainy seasons in 2023. Flood and cyclones have hit countries like Pakistan, Sudan or Madagascar, causing important damage to crops and livelihoods, and the arrival of El Niño conditions are expected to accentuate the occurrence of extreme weather events in the next months.

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, Somalia, 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 and spotlight topics

1.1. Global picture

On 14 September 2023, the Mid-Year Update (MYU) of the Global Report on Food Crises 2023 (GRFC), which covers the current year from January to early August 2023, was published. It shows that levels of high acute food insecurity in 2023 have not improved and the global food crisis risks becoming protracted.

This is a partial update of food crises globally, based on the analysis of data available for 48 countries by August 2023 and hence not directly comparable with figures included in the latest GRFC 2023, which included data from 58 countries. It is therefore important to highlight that analyses customarily carried out in the last quarter of the year are not captured in the MYU and will feed the next GRFC to be released in April/May 2024. This is the case for example of some major food crises such as Syria, Myanmar and Ukraine – that together accounted for 36 million people in IPC/CH or above in 2022. This suggests that the 2023 numbers are likely to increase as data become available for further countries/territories and new shocks such as Russia's withdrawal of the Black Sea Grain Initiative (BSGI), the impact of El Niño, or the coup d'état in Niger are factored in.

In the 48 countries where new data were available up to August 2023, the number of people found in IPC/CH phase or above has increased by around 10% since 2022 to 237.89 million. The 21.6 M increase in people facing high levels of acute food insecurity is explained by both a 16% increase in the analysed population and intensification of drivers of conflict/insecurity, weather extremes and economic shocks in some countries. The share of the population in need of urgent food assistance has largely remained the same, which underscores the protracted nature of the crisis.

Sudan is the country having the biggest increase in the prevalence of people in IPC/CH Phase 3 or above, rising from 24% to 42%. Other countries that are facing an increase in the number and share of the population facing IPC/CH Phase 3 or above or equivalent are Burundi, Djibouti, the Gambia, Haiti, Lebanon (residents and refugees), Liberia, Senegal and Somalia. Improvements have been registered in 15 countries, particularly in Namibia and Sri Lanka.

Overall, the number of people facing the most severe phase of acute food insecurity, IPC/CH phase 5, has decreased notably. As of August 2023, about 128 600 people are estimated or projected to be in IPC/CH Phase 5 in four countries (South Sudan, Burkina Faso, Somalia, Mali). This is considerably lower than the 376 000 estimated in 2022 in seven countries. The decline is explained in by the scale-up of food assistance and improving conditions in some of the affected countries, but also – very likely- by the lack of new data for countries like Ethiopia, where high levels of IPC/CH phase 5 were recorded the last time that analyses were conducted.

Against a background of poverty and inequality, the drivers behind food insecurity remain the same. Conflict remains the main driver for most people experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity while weather extremes are a significant driver in several countries. Despite the downward trend in international food prices since its peak in March 2022 following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, these remain at historically high levels and hence the effects of the cost-of-living crises persist in the vast majority of food-crisis countries.

The forecast for the remaining part of 2023 is bleak. The consequences of Russia's withdrawal of the BSGI and its deliberate attacks on Ukraine's grain facilities will be more clearly felt globally and particularly by those more vulnerable in food affected countries.

1.2. Conflict-induced food insecurity and the weaponisation of food

Conflict and insecurity have been the main drivers behind food insecurity for many years, impacting food security and nutrition in a variety of ways. Conflict displaces communities and limits or even impedes access of communities to food markets and other essential services. It disrupts livelihoods, food production and the availability of food. It renders markets more volatile, which limits further access to markets to those affected by conflict and violence.

In 2022 insecurity remained the most significant driver behind the high levels of food insecurity (IPC/CH 3 or more) faced by around 117 million in 19 countries. All countries with populations suffering from starvation/famine conditions (IPC/CH 5) - Somalia, South Sudan, Yemen, Afghanistan, Haiti, Nigeria and Burkina Faso— face protracted conflict or insecurity. In 2023 conflict and insecurity continue to drive hunger and the weaponization of food continues to be used.

The impact of Russia's invasion of Ukraine

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine continues to inflict a negative impact on global food insecurity. As included in detail in previous reports, Russia's actions have, among others, led to record spikes on food prices, disrupted the global supply of grains, and increased the price of energy, fertilisers and freight. The decision by the Russian Federation in July to withdraw from the Black Sea Grain Initiative and its subsequent deliberate attacks on Ukraine's grain facilities are a clear example of food being used as a weapon of war and will have devastating consequences on Ukraine's agriculture and economy.

Its impact will be felt more heavily by the world's poorest, who are more vulnerable to economic shocks and spend a larger share of their income on food. The Black Sea Grain Initiative (BSGI) became vital to alleviate upward price pressures, helping bring global food prices down to the 2021 levels after hitting record levels following Russian's invasion. Prices for wheat and sunflower oil increased again in July according to the FAO Food Price Index, and the IMF estimates that Russia's exit from the deal could drive global grain prices up by 10% to 15%.

The withdrawal by Russia from the BSGI is also affecting food aid delivery by humanitarian organisations. For instance, Ukraine supplied over half of the wheat procured by the World Food Programme in 2022, and 80% so far in 2023. Without the Black Sea route, the WFP needs to get its grain elsewhere at higher prices and with a longer lead-time. This will widen further the gap between needs and resources at a time when the global food insecurity remains bleak.

Instability spreads across the whole Sahel and Horn of Africa region

Since clashes between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) commenced in April, the conflict has caused the displacement of more than 3.6 million people across Sudan and more than 1 million people have displaced to a neighbouring country². Food security is deteriorating rapidly, with Sudan seeing the biggest increase in high levels of acute food insecurity between 2022 and 2023, both in terms of prevalence and numbers. If the current levels of violence continue, within the next two to four months 2 to 2.5 million people in Sudan could be pushed into hunger³.

In Niger, the impact of the crisis triggered by the military coup d'état in July 2023 may exacerbate the already elevated levels of food insecurity. It is the latest in a series of seven military coups in West and Central Africa since 2020 and will increase further instability in the region.

Following the military takeover, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) closed borders with Niger and imposed with the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) economic sanctions with immediate effect. Trade and border

² Displacement Tracking Matrix. IOM, August 2023. <https://dtm.iom.int/sudan>

³ The Sudan Crisis, Conflict and Food Insecurity. Insecurity Insight, July

2023. <https://bit.ly/SUDCrisisConflictFood1July2023>

closures will reduce supply and increase the price of imported food commodities, which will likely have a knock-on effect on the price and demand for locally-produced cereals. In the week following the announcement of sanctions, the national average price of rice increased by 17%. (WFP Niger Sitrep August 2023). This will compound large pre-existing needs in a country with more than 4 million people living in high levels of acute food insecurity in 2022.

Food as a weapon of war

Against this backdrop, on August 3, 2023 a UN Security Council (UNSC) High-Level Open Debate on Famine and Conflict-Induced Global Food Insecurity was held aiming at identifying ideas to strengthen global food systems and prevent future famines to reduce conflict. Following the debate, the US Presidency of the UNSC released a Joint Communiqué affirming the commitment to take action to end the use of food as a weapon of war and reaffirms the primary responsibility of States to protect the population throughout their whole territory and the need for all parties to armed conflict to respect IHL, as well as the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence in the provision of humanitarian assistance.

This declaration clearly aligns with the EU position against the use of starvation as a weapon of war in line with UN Security Council Resolution 2417. The EU is funding an initiative that aims to enhance evidence-based reporting on conflict-induced hunger by reinforcing and complementing existing accountability mechanisms.

1.3. The funding gap and its consequences on food security

Funding trends and outlook for 2023

Funding for humanitarian food crises witnessed an increasing trend in the 2016-2021 period, with funding in 2021 registering a 20% increase from 2020 and a 10% increase from the previous five-year average. However, additional funding is not growing at the pace needed to tackle the increasing scale and severity of humanitarian food crises. According to the latest GNFC Financial Flows and Food Crises report (FFCC), while funding is increasing in absolute terms, humanitarian assistance per person facing high levels of acute food insecurity has constantly decreased in the past years, from USD 85 per person in 2018 to USD 51 in 2021.

Figure 2: Humanitarian assistance to food sectors per person facing high levels of acute food insecurity.



Per capita analysis does not take into consideration the different operational costs that might increase or decrease humanitarian disbursements depending on many factors (including type of assistance provided, logistic needs and access constraints).

Source: FSIN and GNAFC for acute food insecurity data; GNAFC for data on humanitarian and development assistance based on OCHA FTS and OECD CRS.

Preliminary data suggests that the outlook for 2023 is bleak. As of September 2023, only 25.7% of the funding for food security requested through the United Nations Appeals and Response Plans has been met⁴. The overall volume is currently less than half of the total amount pledged in 2022 (around USD 12 billion) against a background of increasing needs

⁴ <https://fts.unocha.org/global-sectors/6/summary/2023>

and funding requirements (USD 21 billion for the food security sector in UN response plans/appeals compared to USD 19.7 billion in 2022).

This sombre outlook will likely be compounded by the consequences of Russia's withdrawal from the Black Sea Grain Initiative in July and subsequent attacks on Ukraine's grain facilities. Russia's actions have already disrupted grain deliveries worldwide and caused global food price increases. Prices for wheat and sunflower oil increased again in July according to the FAO Food Price Index, and the IMF is estimating that Russia's exit from the deal could drive global grain prices up by 10% to 15% further widening the gap between needs and resources.

Consequences of the funding gap

The consequences of the funding gap are being felt by partners and consequently by those affected by food crises. Lack of appropriate funding implies hard prioritisation decisions contingent on difficult trade-offs, with partners forced to reduce the number of people assisted or reduce the quality of assistance, or both. This can easily lead to a vicious cycle where, for instance, a focus on assisting those facing starvation may come at the expense of others rapidly falling into the same category.

Examples of the impact on partners abound. The ICRC has had to make the hard choice of closing 26 out of its 350 operations around the world and scale-back others. Similarly, at least 38 of 86 WFP country operations have already cut - or plan to soon cut - the size and scope of food, cash and nutrition assistance programmes; that is almost half of WFP operations worldwide. In Syria, WFP ceased providing food assistance in July for 2.5 million out of 5.5 million people who were already receiving only 48% of the recommended 2100 kcal/day/person - a staggering 45% reduction in caseload. In Afghanistan, WFP drastically cut its caseload by 8 million, now assisting only 5 million people in need. In Somalia, where one third of the population was acutely food insecure in 2022 and where 40,350 people were projected to face catastrophic conditions (IPC/CH Phase 5) in June 2023, WFP had to reduce its caseload from 4.5 million to 1.8 million.

The crippling funding situation illustrates the difficulty humanitarian actors face to cover the current caseload, and the need to reconsider strategies, especially as regards targeting. It is also a stark reminder that the donor base on which humanitarian funding including funding for food crises remains shallow and precarious. The biggest aid donors remain the same core group of donor governments. More donors and alternative ways of funding are needed to fight food crises. Simultaneously, additional efforts should be put into doing more with limited resources, finding innovative ways to work more effectively and efficiently.

2. DG ECHO key policy messages

This section highlights the key policy messages and recommendations further elaborated by the DG ECHO field network and geographical units in section 3. Geographical Focus for this reporting period. It comprises both key policy messages common to most contexts under review and a summary of some of the more salient messages at country level.

Key policy messages **common** to most contexts affected by food crises:

- Additional funding is needed to tackle food crises, which have reached an unprecedented scale. Most of the world's major food crises are severely underfunded and the situation risks becoming protracted, with more people facing starvation and others rapidly falling into the same category. More donors and new ways of funding are needed concurrent with additional efforts to deliver humanitarian food assistance more efficiently.
- Improved targeting practices and prioritisation of assistance is needed to ensure life-saving interventions and a consistent coverage for the most vulnerable groups.
- There is an urgent need to identify, accelerate and leverage nexus opportunities, both internally at EU level and in coordination with external actors to reinforce links between humanitarian, lifesaving operations and more long-term livelihoods and resilience-oriented programming and linkages with country-level safety nets.
- The high likelihood of significant impact of El Niño in some of the context analysed is a reminder of the relevance of early warning systems, which should be accompanied by early response actions, and hence the need to invest in and scale-up Anticipatory Action.
- Higher-level efforts are needed by the international community to guarantee humanitarian access to conflict affected areas. In this regard, a coordinated advocacy approach for the respect of IHL is paramount.
- Food assistance needs to be provided in the most efficient way possible. This implies notably to continue pushing for cash-based interventions whenever possible.

Examples of **country-specific** policy messages include:

- In Sudan, humanitarian assistance can only be effective if safe, timely, and unhindered access for humanitarian operations is guaranteed by all stakeholders at all times and irrespective of a ceasefire, including in conflict-affected areas and in areas hosting refugees and returnees from Sudan.
- In Niger, to continue humanitarian advocacy efforts to ensure borders are open for humanitarian assistance.
- In Burkina Faso, to increase efforts and advocacy for more efficient emergency and post-emergency assistance, in a nexus perspective.
- In Chad, to urgently increase food assistance funding in Chad to support refugees, host communities and returnees in the East regions
- In Nigeria, to improve the prioritisation of assistance and vulnerability assessment, ensuring greater coverage for the most vulnerable groups.
- In Madagascar, to support shock-responsive mechanisms, resilience building and capacity strengthening.
- In Lebanon, to advocate for an inclusive and needs-based social protection framework that allows the poorest households to access services.
- In Haiti, to monitor markets and adapt DG ECHO cash interventions, taking into account the evolution of the currency exchange rate and the cost of living.
- In Afghanistan, to secure physical and humanitarian access to all population in need

without discrimination.

- In Yemen, to develop specific strategies to operate in a context of high inflation and depreciation
- In Syria, to prioritise funding of immediate lifesaving response to vulnerable Syrians, with a focus on food and nutrition assistance, as well as early recovery interventions.
- In Somalia, to advocate for increased funding for humanitarian assistance to Somalia, with a focus on food insecurity and anticipatory action in advance of the forecast El Niño flooding.

3. Geographical Focus

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

3.1. West and Central Africa

3.1.1. Burkina Faso

Current situation and evolution from last report

Burkina Faso, like the many African countries, is currently experiencing the rainy season - which also constitutes the lean season. Food security continues to deteriorate in the country despite a good agro-pastoral season. Physical access to markets due to insecurity but also

to the poor road conditions in this rainy season remains a challenge throughout the country. Lack of security is also an issue: in the Sahel region, markets have to be supplied through secure convoys, which also impacts food availability and diversity.

Despite that, compared to the same period last year, an average decrease of 13% is recorded for cereals. However, this level is 35% higher than the five-year average, with specifically: +30% for maize, +35% for millet and +40% for sorghum. Meanwhile, the price of imported products remains high in local markets with higher levels than last year at the same time.

Prices of key staple products



Source: Pregec, March 2023, Dec. 2022

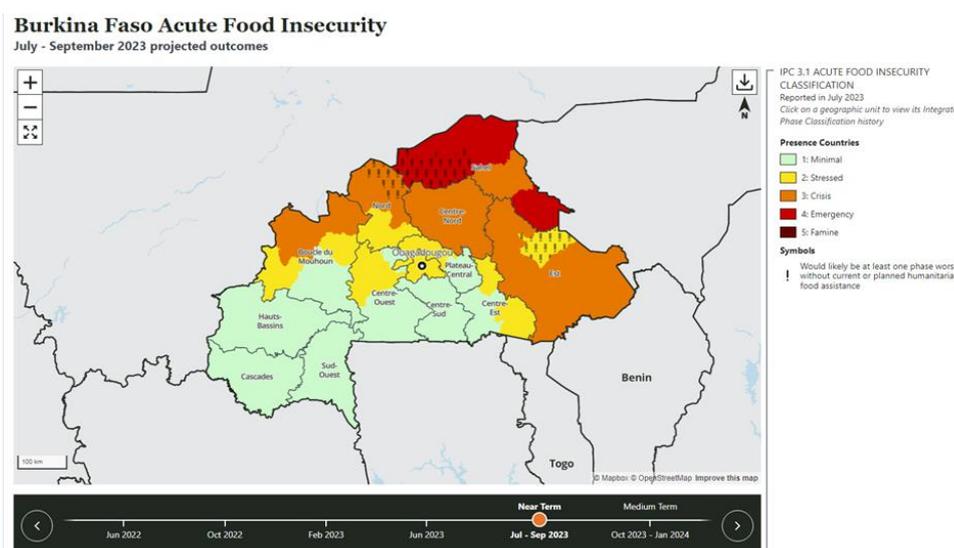
Conflict intensified in recent months, with an increase in towns and populations under blockade and without food (Djibo, Solan, etc.) due to both non-state armed groups' pressure and further restrictions from the Government. Increasingly, emergency assistance must be provided by expensive helicopter 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.

Food insecurity forecast

The humanitarian response to food insecurity during the lean season reached only 15.5% of the 3.3 million people that were in IPC/CH phase 3 and above in July, due to lack of funding and access constraints. Only 270 000 of the 500 000 persons internally displaced between January and July 2023 received emergency food assistance (rapid response), a mere 54%. Meanwhile, around 3 000 people received livelihoods strengthening support, which represents 1.8% of the target.

According to the Global Network against Food Crises, there is a risk of famine in IPC/CH Phase 4 areas⁵.



Source: IPC

Overview of DG ECHO and EU response

- 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 are 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.

Key recommendations and policy/advocacy messages

- The intensification of conflict and the insecurity includes the targeting of civils, food and markets blockage by non-state armed groups that use starvation as a weapon of war.
- The coup d'état in Niger on 26 July 2023 and its aftermath could impact the price and availability of staple foods in Burkina Faso. Transitional authorities in Burkina Faso and Mali have declared their solidarity with the putschists in Niger and have stated that they will consider any military intervention against Niger as a declaration of war.

3.1.2. Central African Republic (CAR)

Situation and evolution

There are some 500 000 IDPs recorded in the CAR, the vast majority (72%) 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.

2,9 million people are estimated in IPC/CH phase 3 and above over the period April 2023 to

⁵ <http://www.fightfoodcrises.net/hunger-hotspots>

August 2023 (April 2023 IPC), 39% of the total population analysed. This represents a decrease compared to 2022. Still, 13 sub-prefectures and around 620 000 people are classified in IPC/CH phase 4 (Emergency), 10% of the population analysed.

The national security situation is generally calm, but remains volatile. Localities of Birao, Zemio, Obo, Bocaranga, Paoua, Markounda and Ndélé remain in a spiral of insecurity and violence, leading to disruption of the supply chain and the inaccessibility of certain production areas. Recurrent violence and resulting displacements continue to reduce the resilience and livelihood opportunities of the communities affected by these conflict dynamics.

Agriculture plays a central role in the livelihoods of the majority of the Central African population, but continues to suffer the consequences of the security situation, recurrent population displacements, access to agricultural inputs and tools, poor support for the sector, as well as heavy rains and crop disease. Therefore, the country relies heavily on imported foods. Internal insecurity, COVID-19, the war in Ukraine and now the war in Sudan, have further affected market functionality and basic foodstuff prices.

Market supplies of staple foods are tight in almost all markets. The supply of maize and manioc in the central and south-eastern parts of the country has fallen considerably from its usual seasonal level. Imports from CAR's main supplier country (Cameroon) continue, albeit at a slower pace due to the poor quality of road infrastructure and cumbersome control procedures along this corridor. The markets of Birao, Zemio, Obo, Ndélé and Batangafo are particularly affected.

Food prices have increased in general compared to their average over the last 5 years. The range of variation as of July 2023 is +31% for cowpeas, +29% for meat, +26% for imported rice, +21% for groundnuts, +16% for cassava and +12% for maize. With the exception of imported rice and red meat, the July 2023 price trend remains upward for all products compared to the level for the same period in 2022.

Despite the increase in transport costs, prices in July 2023 remained relatively stable compared with the previous month. However, they are still very high for vulnerable groups.

Food insecurity forecast

According to the April 2023 IPC/CH analysis, 2.9 million people are expected to be in IPC/CH phase 3 and above in the next months. The long-term drivers (insecurity and lack of livelihoods) will still be present and the reduction or suspension of development aid, especially budget support, owing to the political situation in CAR, could still have an important impact on food security.

There are concerns over the regime's reliance for security on Russian private military contractor Wagner in particular. The underfunding of the food security sector under the HRP 2023 (currently 22%) might also have a negative impact in the upcoming months with an increase of food insecurity among the most vulnerable.

Overview of DG ECHO and EU response

- EUR 20.5 million were allocated under the HIP 2023, topped-up with EUR 3 million (SEAR) and EUR 500 000 (logistics). This makes a total of EUR 24 million.
- DG ECHO is still investing in emergency food assistance but coupled with emergency livelihood recovery to contribute to the reconstruction of the food chain in CAR. Its main partners are WFP, ICRC, SI, DCA, DRC, and Concern.
- DG ECHO priorities remain IPC/CH Phase 4 and Hard-to-reach areas where insecurity is still prevalent.

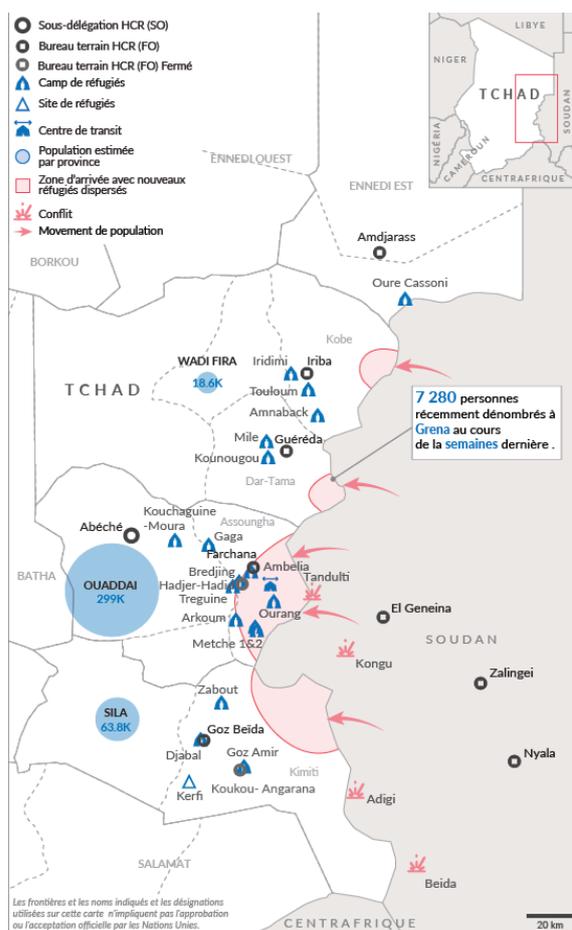
Key recommendations and policy/advocacy messages

- Improve prioritisation of assistance ensuring greater coverage for the most vulnerable groups for emergency assistance in the food sector in CAR.
- Ensure immediate livelihood 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.

3.1.3. Chad

Situation and evolution



Source: UNHCR/OCHA

Persistent violence in Chad and in bordering countries continues to cause displacements. The recent war in Sudan has resulted in an unprecedented number of Sudanese refugees in Eastern Chad. From April to August, 400 000 new refugees have crossed the border from Sudan and are living in harsh conditions. Food assistance has been deployed in the 3 eastern regions, but the response is largely underfunded and insufficient to cover emergency food needs.

Based on this exceptional influx, an extraordinary IPC/CH analysis has been conducted end of July to have updated data. The projections from June to August were revised from over 1.8 million people in Phase 3 and above to over 2.1 million people. Food prices are also very high, e.g. 60% over the average for sorghum at the peak of the crisis.

This extraordinary crisis has led to a reorientation of most partners activity from the Lake region to the East regions. Therefore, food assistance in the Lake region has been drastically reduced to nearly no assistance since May 2023, leaving thousands of severely food insecure people without any kind of food assistance during the worst period of the year.

The December 2022 national SMART survey shows 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%). The nutritional situation has since then quite deteriorated with a dramatically low funding of both the lean season response, the IDP response in the Lake and the Refugee crisis in the East. Therefore, partners have already alarmed on the increasing numbers of SAM admissions.

Food insecurity forecast

The Sudan crisis, the seasonal floodings, the exceptionally high prices and the lack of funding for food assistance are aggravating factors in an already structurally vulnerable country. This superposition of drivers could lead to an even more severe situation in the upcoming months.

The nutrition situation is also of great concern with already a visible increase in the number of SAM admissions in many regions. There is currently no sign of improvement of the situation in Chad and durable solutions are not in the horizon, neither for protracted IDP or for the newly or protracted refugees.

Overview of DG ECHO and EU response

- DG ECHO is supporting emergency food security response to forcibly displaced people (50% of the RRM allocated to food), as well as lean season response. A support is also provided to the Food Security Cluster at national and Lac Province level.
- DG ECHO has activated two additional top-ups in July and August 2023 to respond to the Sudan refugee's crisis in the East and triggered several Crisis Modifiers on existing contracts, leading to an additional 5.5 million budget to WFP response.

Key recommendations and policy/advocacy messages

- Urgently increase food assistance funding in Chad to support refugees, host communities and returnees in the East regions.
- Continue to support the emergency response in the Lake region to avoid a deterioration of the food security of IDPs and host communities.
- Support the Lean Season Response Plan of the Chadian government in areas with aggravating factors such as conflicts, floodings, or other natural disasters, in particular where the national response capacities are overwhelmed.
- 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.

3.1.4. Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

Situation and evolution (including forecast)

25.8 million people in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) are estimated to be acutely food insecure according to the revised IPC/CH held in April 2023 for a period running from January to June. This analysis shows that 4% of the population is at emergency level (IPC/CH phase 4) and 22% at crisis level (IPC/CH phase 3). 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.

Food security is still deteriorating rapidly in the provinces of North and South Kivu and Ituri, as the conflicts, particularly the M23 crisis, remain unresolved. Nearly 650 000 people are living around Goma in makeshift shelters in extremely precarious conditions. The needs are colossal in terms of food security, health, WASH and shelter. Protection issues are also on the increase, as negative coping mechanisms are being put in place by women/young girls via the houses of tolerance.

An in-depth analysis of the food/protection issues is underway to mitigate this most worrying situation. In its emergency appeal of 24 August 2023, WFP estimates that 6.7 million people need food assistance in the provinces of North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri. WFP needs an additional USD 567 million for assistance (in-cash or in-kind) in those 3 provinces between August 2023 and January 2024. Current WFP's assistance is covering 1.25 million people only, and funds to continue cash transfers will be lacking from end of September.

According to FEWSNET analysis, the July the post-harvest period recorded a 15% drop in production in the North-East and Center-East. This has resulted in shorter stocks, with the lean season starting earlier than usual in August. In addition, the devaluation of the Congolese franc continues, losing 13% of its value from January to June 2023. This explains the rise in the price of basic food items.

Overview of the response

- ECHO has been a key actor in supporting the "System Wide Scale-Up" declared on June

16, 2023, to intensify the humanitarian operations in response to the M23 crisis. This scale-up focuses on food, protection (including gender-based violence), and disease outbreaks (cholera, Mpox, etc.). Three provinces are targeted by this decision (Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu), which will run until December 2023.

- As of July 17, 2023, nine UN Agencies and INGOs have already increased their operational capacity, but significant funding shortfalls are anticipated before the end of the year that will jeopardise ongoing efforts. This may lead to an extension of the initiative beyond December .
- DG ECHO funded EUR 81 million early in 2023, EUR 47.2 million from the HIP and EUR 33.8 million from the SEAR. This represents 4% of the HRP 2023 budget. EUR 8.4 million were allocated to the food security and nutrition sectors to support cash and food distribution for IDPs in acute emergency.

Recommendations:

- The growing humanitarian needs require additional contributions to avoid intervention shortfalls by the end of the year. By the end of August, the HRP 2023 was funded at 34% only. Global Advocacy and robust funding mobilisation is needed urgently to sustain the expanded humanitarian action and achieve results.
- Nexus opportunities targeting people both in IPC/CH phases 3 and 4 should continue to be pursued, combining emergency assistance through food distributions and cash transfers for IPC/CH phase 4 populations with emergency agricultural and livelihoods recovery actions for IPC/CH phase 3 populations, in line with the food security sector's strategy.
- Strengthen the analysis and the response integrating protection mainstreaming approaches and referral pathways toward protection actors to respond to risk exposures linked to food insecurity.
- 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).

3.1.5. Mali

Situation and evolution

Overall, a certain stability of the price of cereals has been observed with a decrease of 37% compared to 2022, even if it remains 8% higher than the average of the last 5 years. However, there is very high variability in prices between the central and northern regions for the same product. For example, sorghum costs 43% more in the North than in the South, and the same happens with local millet at +46% and local maize at +47%.

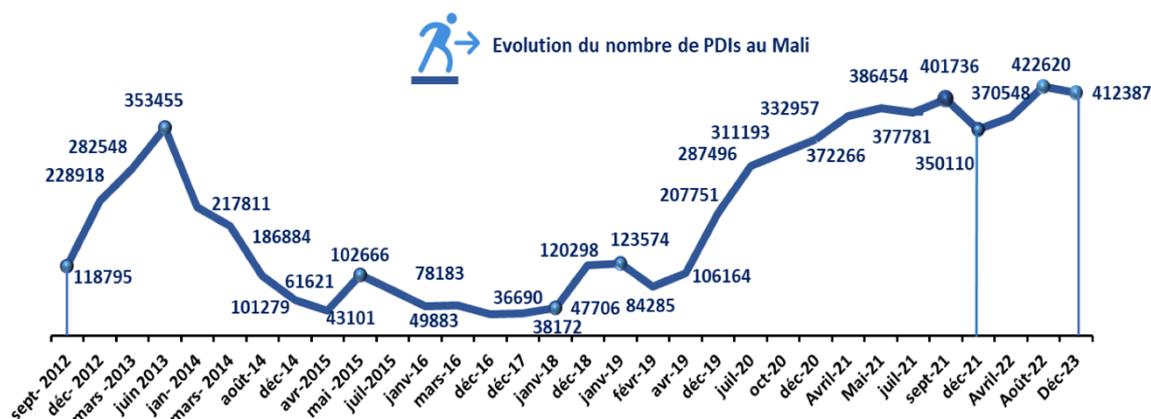
The main causes of food insecurity remain the persistence and/or aggravation of insecurity in the centre and north, which tends to spread to the south of the country and continues to produce important population movements, disruptions of socio-economic activities as well as poor humanitarian access and difficulties for the population to access basic services. This situation is particularly exacerbated in the Menaka region, which is classified as being in IPC/CH phase 4 with pockets of areas in IPC/CH Phase 5.

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 aim to assist 5.7 million people (compared to 5.3 million in 2022) knowing that HRP 2023 is only financed at 21% as mid-August (HRP 2022 reached 40.4%).

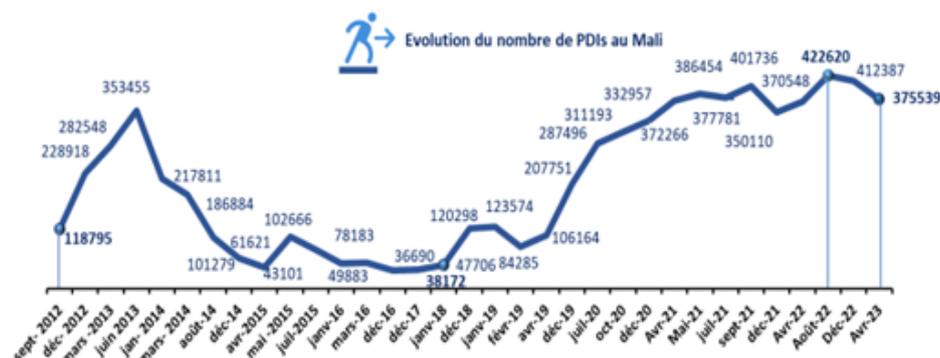
For the food assistance sector, by mid-August, 36% of the target population received an assistance, and 18% of the required budget for this sector had been secured.

Food insecurity forecast

The security and humanitarian situation continue to worsen in the North and Centre of the country, while insecurity keeps spreading further South, notably in Sikasso. Threats and violence against civilian populations are increasing, leading to numerous forced displacements and growing protection incidents. For the lean season response, WFP had to make adjustments and will only target 30% of people in IPC/CH phase 3, and provide 2-month rations from August 2023.



Graphique 1 : Evolution du nombre de PDIs de septembre 2012 au 30 avril 2023



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

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

Overview of DG ECHO and EU response

- EUR 31 million have been allocated in 2023, including EUR 5 million contribution from the SEAR. The main sectors remain Rapid Multi-sectoral Response, including food assistance to IDPs, shelter, wash and non-food items; health/nutrition, food assistance, protection and education. DG ECHO increasingly provides aid through cash and vouchers interventions. Mutualised logistics services and support to operations are also very important in DG ECHO operations in Mali.

Key recommendations and policy/advocacy messages

- Additional financial support and scaling up of the response is required for more efficient emergency humanitarian assistance: multi sectoral rapid response assistance, food assistance, health/nutrition and support to operations in a more complex environment

and where long-term funding (development and cooperation) is scarce.

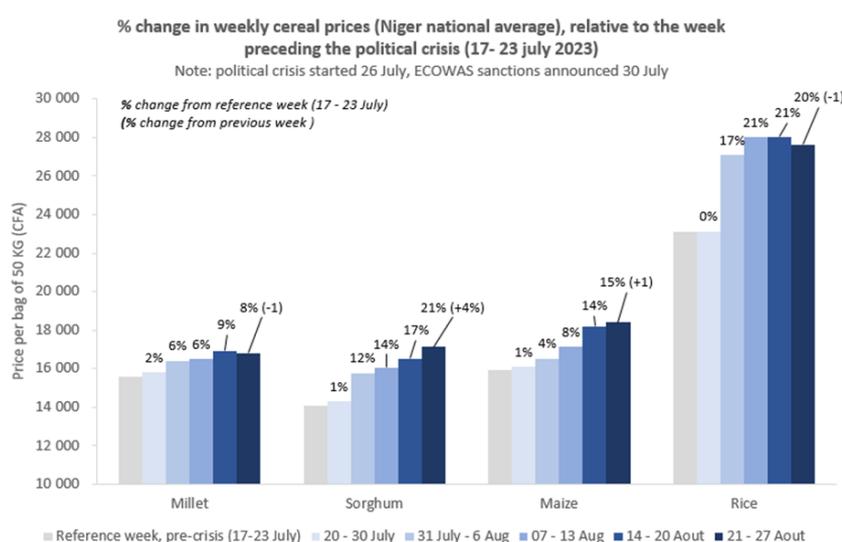
- Continue to play a leading role in coordination and advocacy for the respect of IHL, principled aid delivery and increased assistance to Mali, and advocate with other services and donors for increased engagement in Mali.
- Opportunities for nexus are limited due to the political crisis and security environment, with the almost total suspension of development cooperation by EU and EU MS.
- The impact of the putsch in Niger on 26 July 2023 must be closely monitored as transitional authorities in both Mali and Burkina Faso have declared their solidarity with the putschists in Niger and reject the ECOWAS sanctions. They have officially stated that will consider any military intervention against Niger as a declaration of war.
- Procurement corridors and access to populations in needs are jeopardised by the political decisions and armed conflict activism, against the backdrop of MINUSMA⁶ withdrawal. This requires efforts to maintain principled humanitarian access.

3.1.6. Niger

Situation and evolution

Since the putsch of 26 July 2023 marking the accession of the National Council for the Safeguarding of the Fatherland (CNSP) to power, Niger has been under ECOWAS trade and financial sanctions which includes an importation ban. This directly impacts the country's socio-economic activities, in a context of significant rise in the price of staple food and severe food insecurity affecting 3.3 million people (13% of the total population) during the lean season (June – July – August 2023).

Cereal prices remain generally high. For maize, compared to the week before the events of July 26 and the same period in 2022, there is an increase of 7% and 26% respectively. For rice, there has been an increase of 17% and 19% compared to the same 2 reference periods.



Food insecurity forecast

Cases of IPC/CH phase 3 are concentrated in the regions of Tillabéry and Tahoua as well as in those of Diffa and Maradi, where the persistence of terrorist attacks hamper livelihood activities and the distribution of food assistance. An additional 7,3 million people (28% of the population) is estimated to be moderately food insecure (IPC/CH phase 2) and could fall into severe food insecurity if faced with significant shocks (such as significant price hikes or loss of livelihoods, which are expected due to the current crisis).

⁶ United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali

Following the IPC/CH analysis of March 2023, a target of 3 280 000 people was set to assist people in severe food insecurity during the 2023 lean season through the National Plan for Responses to Food and Nutritional Insecurity and the Humanitarian Response Plan. However, to date only 1 out of the 3 planned phases of government-sponsored general food distributions have been carried out, and only 4 out of the 6 campaigns of subsidies on foods sales. There is thus a risk of insufficient food assistance to vulnerable households, with could in turn increase in the number of areas and people severely food insecure.

Overview of DG ECHO and EU response

- EUR 33 million have been released under the 2023 HIP, including EUR 8 million from the SEAR, to support a multi-sectoral humanitarian response, notably through 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.
- As regards cooperation assistance, although 25M EUR of budget support addressing food security, nutrition security and sustainable agriculture has been allocated in 2022 thus complementing the global allocation of 195 EURM, in light of the military takeover, this allocation has been suspended. In terms of on-going programs in this area, the EU is still assessing the possibility to pursue them, depending on how the situation will evolve.

Key recommendations and policy/advocacy messages

- The combined effects of the sanctions imposed by ECOWAS and the difficulties encountered in the implementation of the subsidies on foods sales and government-sponsored general food distributions could deteriorate the food security of vulnerable populations. Border closures due to the sanctions are already having operational impacts on humanitarian assistance as food trucks en route to Niger and Burkina Faso have been delayed in Togo and Benin. Humanitarian advocacy efforts to which DG ECHO contributed are expected to lead to the reopening of the borders for humanitarian assistance but the situation should be monitored closely. The authorities of Benin have now authorised humanitarian cargo to cross the border from Benin to Niger. But de facto authorities in Niger are not yet allowing the entry of cargos from Benin until further notice.
- According to OCHA, Niger's humanitarian response plan is only 37% funded. The remaining 63% is needed to cover the needs expressed at the beginning of 2023. Such needs are set to increase as the socio-economic situation deteriorates.

3.1.7. Nigeria

Situation and evolution

The humanitarian crisis in Northeast Nigeria continues, with civilians bearing the brunt of a conflict that has resulted in widespread displacement, destruction of infrastructure, and a near-collapse of basic social services. As many as 2.2 million people are internally displaced in the most affected northeast states of Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe (BAY), of which over 80% are in Borno State, with women and children comprising most of those internally displaced according to IOM.

Inflation rates have increased steadily since October 2020, and saw an especially sharp jump of 24.08% in July 2023. This increase is for the seventh consecutive time and is expected to further increase in light of the increase in fuel prices.

For the Global Network on Food Crises, Nigeria is part of the nine countries at the highest alert level, as there are already populations facing starvation (Catastrophe, IPC/CH Phase 5), and the country is facing severe aggravating factors that could deteriorate the situation further. There are 24.4 million people currently in IPC/CH phase 3 and above according to the March 2023 IPC/CH analysis, which represents 13% of the analysed population.

Food needs remain very high, especially in the Northeast (BAY States) and the North-West, where acute food needs have significantly increased over the years, along with acute malnutrition. The Humanitarian Situation Monitoring of June 2023 in the inaccessible areas of the BAY states shows concerning food consumption deficits and limited diversity of diets. Approximately 48% of the households struggle to have sufficient food intake, and nearly 69% experience a crisis or higher levels of food insecurity (IPC/CH phase 3 and above), further evidenced in the pervasive use of food-based coping strategies. Approximately 36% of the households rely on crisis coping strategies to meet their food needs.

According to the latest data of July 2023, 51% of households in Northeast Nigeria have inadequate food consumption. This marks a 12-point increase compared to the same time last year and an 8-point increase compared to the start of the lean season. IDPs and returnees show significantly higher levels of deprivation and vulnerability in terms of food consumption, coping, nonmonetary poverty, and food stock levels, especially IDPs residing in host communities.

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 SAM cases and 4.3 million MAM cases. In the Northeast, the burden of acute malnutrition will likely increase by 16% compared to 2022 due to the impact of acute insecurity, 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 May 2023, more than 300 000 SAM cases were admitted to the nutrition centres in Nigeria.

The closure of all IDP camps remains a policy of the Borno State Government, reducing access to those in need. All formal camps have been closed in Maiduguri and the state government has indicated they will also target informal camps, as well as the camps in the garrison towns. 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 subsequent population movements into congested IDP camps. The uncoordinated relocation of IDPs to inaccessible or hard-to-reach areas risks increasing food insecurity and malnutrition as well as the safety and security of those being relocated.

Food Insecurity forecast

Insecurity linked to the ongoing conflict between non-state armed groups (NSAG) and government security forces, banditry, and intercommunal clashes remain the key drivers of food insecurity. Farmers struggle to access and cultivate their lands, 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 in Borno State 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. In comparison to the same period in the previous year, about 35% of cultivating households have some food stocks remaining, a two-point increase. However, only 23% have stocks that will last longer than a month. Food consumption is therefore expected to worsen over the coming months. 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. Severe flooding has already affected people across Nigeria and numbers are expected to increase over the rainy season period.

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. With the inauguration of the new government, two policies -the ending of the fuel subsidy and the liberalization of the foreign currency exchange rate- have also fuelled inflation and escalated food prices. The ongoing devaluation of the Naira will continue to exert pressure on food prices throughout Nigeria. Nigeria's annual inflation rate increased above 24% in

2023, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), as fuel shortages drove transport costs higher and affected the supply of goods and commodities.

Overview of DG ECHO and EU response

- DG ECHO has allocated EUR 40.45 million to respond to the urgent needs of conflict-affected population in Nigeria in 2023, including EUR 6 million from the SEAR. Priority sectors are food assistance, health, nutrition, protection and WASH/Shelter. DG ECHO provides aid through cash, vouchers, and in-kind deliveries.
- EU/DG ECHO is a leading voice in humanitarian advocacy on the Northeast.

Key recommendations and policy/advocacy messages

- 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 and safe, immediately support agriculture in the crop season to ensure better agricultural production in a “do no harm” and principled manner.

3.2. East and Southern Africa

3.2.1. Ethiopia

Current situation and evolution from last report

The food security situation in Ethiopia remains concerning as a result of the effects of the crises affecting the country. While the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) mid-term review is ongoing and findings are expected to be published in September 2023, preliminary findings seem to point out to similar levels of food insecurity or slightly below compared to the initially identified HRP figure of 20 million people in need of food assistance at the beginning of the year.

In the last months, the effects of the drought have continued to be felt in southern areas of the country mainly, where 15 million people are estimated to require emergency food assistance from July to September. While the Gu rains have been adequate, the effects of three consecutive years of drought had severe effects in livelihoods depletion and therefore livelihood recovery is expected to take time and be difficult without external support.

The effects of conflicts and climate events continue to drive food insecurity in Ethiopia. Tigray continues to be a particular area of concern, as are other areas affected by conflict where livelihood activities cannot resume normally. According to the last DTM, there are close to 4.4 million IDPs in Ethiopia requiring food assistance and access to basic needs.

Deterioration in malnutrition is reported in some regions such as areas affected by the Northern Ethiopia crisis, Oromia and SNNP/South Ethiopia. UNICEF reports that despite improved access in conflict affected areas, malnutrition rates remain high in Tigray, Amhara and Afar. In Oromia region alone, more than 13000 SAM cases were admitted to therapeutic feeding programs, an increase of 32% over the same period in 2022. Medicine and therapeutic supplementary foods shortage pose additional challenges to the nutrition response for children in drought affected Oromia, South Ethiopia, and SNNP. Partners face challenges in their response due to limited funding, shortage in TSFP supplies and difficulties in reaching those in need in hard-to-reach areas

Food security forecast

Inflation continues to surge as staple food prices continue to increase, with certain basic food items doubling from last year. As reported by the CSA the food basket has increased by a third compared to last year. The effect of newly arising potential conflicts, as recently unfolded in the Amhara region, is also having an impact on the internal production and trade between regions, resulting in further increase on prices of main staple foods. The prices are expected to remain above the five preceding year's average through to June 2024.

As a result of the situation of Aid diversion, humanitarian food assistance funded by the international community has been halted in all the country since June 2023 and from February 2023 in the case of Tigray. It is expected that the food security situation for the people already in need of food assistance will deteriorate, particularly for IDPs and populations affected by ongoing internal conflicts. The suspension has coincided with the lean season in Tigray as well as in the agricultural highlands of the country. One of the consequences of the discussion around aid diversion could indicate fewer number of people in need of food assistance in the country. However, the magnitude and severity of needs remain high for people affected by conflict and climate related disasters as well as the economic downturn.

Forecast models show increasing concern for the potential of meteorological drought, notably in central, northern, and southwestern crop-producing areas of the country as recent rainfall performance assessment for the Kiremt season indicates insufficient precipitation during key production stages (June to September). This is expected to have a negative impact on food security.

Overview of DG ECHO and EU response

- EUR 82.5 million is allocated in 2023 and EUR 76.45 million was allocated in 2022. DG ECHO allocation in 2023 supporting food assistance and Multipurpose cash represents 11% and 14% of ECHO funding respectively. Other sectors include Nutrition (15%) and Health (14%), WASH (11%), protection (10%), DRR/DP (8%), education (9%) and coordination (3%).
- The EU has approved three Individual measures for a total of 342,5 million euros. Individual measure 2 and 3, which are under contracting process, include actions aimed at improving the food security situation in the country with particular attention to areas affected by conflict and climate related events.
- Food assistance interventions by other actors remain very limited. Between July and August, there was a one-off wheat distribution conducted by the government for 3.8 million people from the 15 million prioritized for the drought response plan. Additionally, WFP started the pilot of PSNP shock responsive component in Tigray, providing wheat to 110 000 people.
- The 2023 HRP is funded at 26,61 % with a total funding gap of USD 2.9 billion, including a USD 1.6 billion gap for food assistance.

Key recommendations and policy/advocacy messages

- Scaling up of an integrated and coordinated responses ensuring measurable outcomes is urgently needed.
- Support to strengthen food security information systems and analysis is required.
- There is a need to support the implementation of independent and needs based assessments as well as improved targeted approaches.
- There is a need to enhance support from development actors to support recovery and build further resilience of affected communities.

3.2.2. Kenya

Current situation and evolution from last report

The food security situation has improved across the arid and semi-arid counties, with the population facing acute food insecurity and consequently requiring humanitarian assistance significantly reducing from 4.4 million based on February analysis to the current 2.8 million (2.3 million in IPC/CH Phase 3 and 0.5 million in IPC/CH Phase 4). The significant improvement across the counties and subsequent reduction in the numbers was primarily attributed to the good performance of the March to May rain season, which saw most parts of the country receive above-average rainfall improving water resources, pastures and cropping. However, the effects of 3 consecutive years of drought will take time for livelihood recovery as depletion of assets in these areas was too severe.

Market prices for staple food prices, especially maize as well as other food commodities, have remained high since 2022. While the harvest from the current season will slightly ease the market prices, the cost of food production and marketing remains high due to factors such as the depreciation of the Kenya Shilling, high price of inputs such as fertilizer and the high cost of fuel that affects activities such as ploughing and transportation. Whereas the annual inflation rate in Kenya is decreasing reportedly at 6.7% in August 2023, the lowest since April 2022, from 7.3% in the prior month, the cost of food prices remains high affecting the purchasing power of poor and very households in both rural and urban areas.

Food insecurity forecast

During the projected period from October 2023 to January 2024, the food security situation is expected to improve in most parts of the country due to likely above-average October to December short rains. The numbers of acute food insecurity are projected to reduce to 1.5 million people, concentrating mostly in the counties of Mandera, Marsabit and Turkana. These are also counties assessed with lower livestock stock and significantly smaller areas available for cultivation, hence higher reliance market purchases.

Despite these improvements, acute malnutrition continues to be high above the emergency threshold in most arid counties, primarily attributed to the compounded adverse impacts of the prolonged drought that negatively affected food security, water, hygiene and sanitation, and disease. Following the July 2023 analysis, Turkana County remains a hotspot of acute malnutrition with extremely critical, IPC/CH phase 5 and GAM WHZ of over 30%, other 9 counties are also experiencing high malnutrition.

There is more than a 90% probability that El Niño will continue into early 2024 resulting to heavy rainfalls. Across the arid and semi-arid counties also recovering from the recent drought, this is projected to result in significant damage to cropland and irrigation infrastructure including in the marginal agricultural areas, with loss of livestock, especially sheep and goats, in the pastoral areas. The country is also at risk on wide spread of water borne disease and especially cholera. Kenya reported a cholera outbreak since October 2022, though a cholera vaccination campaign is ongoing, the coming rain season is likely to aggravate the outbreak.

Overview of DG ECHO and EU response

- Total funding HIP 2022: EUR 16.4 million. Total funding HIP 2023: EUR 15.5 million.
- Allocation for priority sectors: food assistance (WFP + Kenya Cash Consortium for multi-purpose cash assistance), health and nutrition (IRC + UNICEF), food assistance for encamped refugees (WFP) and Ready to Use Therapeutic Food – RUTF (UNICEF).
- The USD 290 million Kenya Drought Appeal launched by OCHA in 2022.
- Following the August 2022 support from the US government worth USD 310.9 million, the USA is the first responder to the drought, followed by Germany, the EU, CERF and

Canada.

Key recommendations and policy/advocacy messages

- Funding gap: additional short and long-term financial support is required.
- Improve prioritisation of assistance for the most vulnerable groups especially for refugee response.
- Explore nexus possibilities Advocate with other services and donors for increased engagement in Kenya.

3.2.3. Madagascar

Current situation and evolution from last report

The IPC/CH analysis for Madagascar's Great South and Great Southeast published on 22 of August identified that currently 1.08 million people (16%) in 22 districts are experiencing high level of acute food insecurity, with 51 000 in emergency phase (IPC/CH phase 4).

For the Great South, although the rainfall was favourable this year, households whose vulnerability has been exacerbated by a succession of shocks in recent years have not been able to improve agricultural production and their access to food significantly. The lack of agricultural equipment and seeds, the proliferation of insects and crop pests, in particular the locust invasion, and insecurity are major factors of food insecurity in Great South.

In the Great Southeast, households have not been able to recover from the repeated passages of intense tropical cyclones (Emnati and Batsirai) during the 2021/2022 agricultural campaign and cyclone Freddy in March 2023. Despite the post-harvest period of cereals and tubers, significant food deficit problems are observed in the districts of Befotaka, Nosy Varika and Ikongo; and this despite ongoing humanitarian aid (5% of the population in IPC/CH phase 4). The difficulties of access to these areas prevent the optimization of interventions.

The high prevalence of water use-related and vector-borne diseases (malaria) in most of the areas analysed adds to the already precarious and difficult situation. It is also important to take into account the price increases, accentuated in particular by the depression of the Ariary due to the rise in the price of energy and the upheaval created by the war in Ukraine. Expected inflation for the year 2023 should reach around 9% according to forecasts by INSTAT (National Institute of Statistics) .

Food insecurity forecast

The projections show a progressive deterioration trend, culminating from January to April 2024, with about 1.1 million people in the Great South and 651 000 in Great Southeast needing urgent assistance due to cyclones, floods, and erratic rainfall. Overall, 1.72 million people (26%) will require immediate assistance.

Between June 2023 and April 2024, acute malnutrition is likely to worsen significantly. Approximately 458 700 children under five are likely to suffer acute malnutrition. Among them, over 121 000 children are expected to suffer from Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) and nearly 338 000 children are expected to experience Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM).

The districts likely to be most severely affected are Nosy Varika and Ikongo in Great Southeast (IPC/CH phase 4) as well as Amboasary, Betroka, Betioky, and Beloha the Great South (IPC/CH phase 3).

Taking these results into account, the Humanitarian Country Team has recommended that the national humanitarian plan be extended until May/June 2024. However, spatial and temporal prioritisation must be ensured, in particular: i) immediate scale-up of the response for the districts in phase 3 during the harvest and post-harvest period, ii) interventions focused on anticipatory actions for the districts in phase 2 until the end of the year, iii)

scaling up of responses from January 2024 and during the lean season until April/May for districts in phase 3; iii) swing to resilience for districts that will remain in phase 2 for all periods from July 2023 to April 2024.

Overview of DG ECHO and EU response

- 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 18.1 million is being allocated, including EUR 1.2 million from EHRC for a helicopter managed by WFP, EUR 0.5 million ALERT funding in emergency response to Tropical Cyclone Freddy, EUR 0.1 million DREF in emergency response to Tropical Cyclone Freddy and EUR 3 million to the 2nd phase of IFRC Programmatic Partnership.
- 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.
- 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.
- The 2023 flash appeal is being revised and extended until May/June 2024. It 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 requirement is USD 214.7 million, with the biggest requirements going to water and sanitation, food security and education. The Flash appeal funding at the end of June reached approximately 35%.

Key recommendations and policy/advocacy messages

- Closely monitor the evolution of El Niño. For the Great South, normal to below normal precipitation is expected during the start of the agricultural season. This may result in drought, a shift in the agricultural calendar and/or erratic rainfall, negatively affecting agricultural yields and the availability of water resources. For the Great Southeast, cyclones and floods are predicted to damage agricultural infrastructure and household livelihoods. Food availability and access could be disrupted. These hazards will make access to certain districts/communes even more difficult, making it difficult to supply markets and implement humanitarian assistance activities.
- Take into account the potential of increased insecurity and political violence ahead and post national elections.
- 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).

3.2.4 Malawi

Current situation and evolution from last report

Following the publication of the IPC/CH on 18 August, 3 million people representing 15% of the total population are experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity in 28 districts in both rural and urban areas in Malawi. This represents the worst results of the last 5 years, and an

additional 5.9 million individuals are currently classified under IPC/CH phase 2. Eleven districts are classified in IPC/CH phase 3, including Balaka, Blantyre, Chikhwawa, Chiradzulu, Machinga, Mangochi, Mulanje, Nsanje, Phalombe, Thyolo and Zomba. FEWSNET is estimating that Malawi will register a negative net maize stock figure for the 2023/24 consumption season due to production reductions caused by low use of fertilizers, crop destruction by Tropical Cyclone Freddy, and post-harvest losses.

The main drivers of food insecurity in Malawi continue to be (i) various climatic shocks, mainly dry spells, the impact of the severe cyclones, and floods including Tropical Cyclone Freddy, leading to below-average crop production. The upcoming El Niño weather patterns expected for the next rainy season could exacerbate the challenges in the forthcoming six months (ii) economic decline and inflation fuel shortages, higher production costs, and high transportation expenses, the 25% devaluation of the Malawi Kwacha; (iii) high food inflation leading to high food prices and low purchasing power.

Food insecurity forecast

The poorest households in cyclone-affected areas of southern Malawi will likely run out of their own-produced food stocks between June and September (compared to around December in a normal year) and increasingly rely on market purchases as their main source of food.

From October 2023 to March 2024, as Malawi enters the lean period, the food security situation is expected to deteriorate, with 4.4 million people, representing 22% of the total population in IPC/CH phase 3 or above. Those affected will require humanitarian assistance to sustain their livelihoods, particularly in the southern parts of the country.

Overview of DG ECHO and EU response

- In 2023, the EU has allocated a total of EUR 0.9 million to respond to TC Freddy. In addition, the EU is supporting WFP with EUR 2 million for cash assistance to refugees.
- Germany, and the United States Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance are also contributing. However, a USD 1.6 million funding gap remains for WFP to continue providing food assistance at 75% ration size to refugees until the end of the year.

Key recommendations and policy/advocacy messages

- Expanding social cash transfer programs can be an effective strategy to address immediate and long-term food security challenges. These programs provide direct financial assistance to vulnerable households, allowing them to meet their basic needs and invest in income-generating activities.
- It is imperative to enhance monitoring systems in high-risk areas to ensure prompt identification and appropriate service referral for children displaying moderate to severe acute malnutrition.

3.2.4. Mozambique

Current situation and evolution from last report

Over 3.15 million people are considered acutely food insecure since March 2023 and in need of urgent assistance. In the absence of a new food security analysis, the Food Security Outlook for Mozambique issued by FEWSNET (June 2023 – January 2024) confirms that the weather shocks which affected the country in 2023 drive severe food insecurity outcomes in addition to a looming El Niño season.

In particular, the drought, flood and cyclone affected areas of southern and central Mozambique report poor harvest, depleted food reserves, disruptions to livelihood activities and limited income-generating opportunities thus resulting in increased food insecurity vulnerabilities. While official production estimates are currently unavailable, yield and

production estimates from USDA-FAS estimate that the national maize harvest is likely to be around 1.8 million tons, around 18% lower than last year and similar to the five-year average.

In conflict-affected Cabo Delgado province, although the security situation is improving, IPC/CH phase 3 and IPC/CH phase 2 acute food insecurity outcomes are widespread, as most returnees (estimated by the last IOM DTM Mobility Tracking Assessment as of May 12, 2023 in around 420 000 people) have not yet recovered their basic livelihoods, and Internally Displaced People (IDPs) remain largely dependent on humanitarian assistance to minimize food consumption gaps.

The main drivers of food insecurity in Mozambique continue to be:

- i. The armed conflict in Cabo Delgado province;
- ii. The impact of the severe 2023 rain/cyclone season – which included tropical cyclone Freddy's double landfalls and extended riverine floods affecting crop production in several provinces;
- iii. Food prices more than doubled after the passage of Cyclone Freddy and still high despite declining since then. The main staple, maize grain, reports prices 9% to 54% above last year, with no expected seasonal decrease, along with cassava (+4.3%) and vegetable oil (+33%);
- iv. 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;
- v. inflation and currency trend, whereby despite a slight deceleration in the inflation rate, the cost of living remains high for most poor and very poor households.

Food insecurity forecast

In absence of an updated IPC/CH food security analysis, the most likely scenario is described by the FEWSNET Food Security Outlook from June to September 2023. The report indicates that in the worst flood and cyclone-affected areas of Zambézia, Sofala, and Tete, very poor and poor households and with limited livelihoods coping strategies are facing large food consumption gaps indicative of IPC/CH phase 3. The lean season starting in October 2023 to January 2024 coincides with the rains and the cyclone season in addition to the projected El Niño. With the recurrent shocks repeatedly affecting the same vulnerable populations, adversely affecting coping and resilience capacities, the humanitarian needs will remain high.

In Cabo Delgado's conflict-affected areas, displaced households are expected to continue returning to their places of origin throughout the outlook period to better access food and income due to limited livelihood opportunities in their resettlement areas. However, the number of IDPs is likely to remain high through 2023. Most areas impacted by conflict are expected to remain in IPC/CH phase 3), while areas receiving regular humanitarian assistance are expected to remain in IPC/CH Phase 2.

Overview of DG ECHO and EU response

- In 2023, DG ECHO has allocated a total of EUR 26.5 million to Mozambique so far. Of these, EUR 7.6 million to support food and nutrition assistance and last-mile delivery in Northern Mozambique.
- Most of the funding allocation by DG ECHO and by other humanitarian donors like US/BHA to humanitarian food assistance goes to WFP Mozambique.
- The EU NutriNorte intends to allocate EUR 30 million on Nutrition for a duration of 5 years (2022-2027) targeting the provinces of Zambezia, Nampula and Cabo Delgado. Discussions on programmatic priorities including target districts are still ongoing between the EU Delegation and the partner UNICEF. Of interest will be the nexus with ECHO-funded emergency nutrition in Cabo Delgado.

Key recommendations and policy/advocacy messages

- The complete roll-out of WFP’s Vulnerability Based Targeting (VBT) across the targeted nine districts in Cabo Delgado by 2023 is a priority to ensure the correct targeting of the most vulnerable households and the consequent decrease in the humanitarian food assistance caseload, also considering prospect – likely static – humanitarian funding allocations.
- The high likelihood of significant impact of El Niño on agriculture production in traditionally drought-affected areas of central and south Mozambique – already severely affected by 2023 extreme weather events – would urge an acceleration on the scaled-up investment by Development Partners into Anticipatory Actions. These actions are necessary also considering that humanitarian funding allocations for Mozambique are predominantly targeting Cabo Delgado.

3.2.5. Somalia

Current situation and evolution from last report

The food security situation in Somalia remains critical, with an estimated 6.5 million people facing acute food insecurity, including 1.4 million children under the age of 5 who are acutely malnourished.

The main drivers of food insecurity in Somalia are the ongoing drought, conflict – linked to a resurgence of Al Shabaab activities, the withdrawal of ATMIS and interclan conflicts - and economic crisis. The drought has caused widespread crop failure and livestock losses, combined with the effects of the desert locust, while the conflict has displaced millions of people and disrupted markets. The macroeconomic crisis and the consequences of the war in Ukraine, have also made it more difficult for people to afford food, while the increase of disease outbreaks due to floodings also impact food security .

Although the March-May rains performed better than expected, the unprecedented, multi-season drought is effectively continuing in large parts of the country until further relief rains are expected in October-December. Perversely, the little rains received earlier in the year in both Somalia and the Ethiopian Highlands resulted in flash flooding that displaced over 250 000 people in the country.

Food Insecurity Forecasts

The compounding effects of the extreme and prolonged drought, an ongoing and escalating armed conflict which is unlikely to be resolved in the near future, and the economic crisis continue to impact people's food security. The upcoming rains under El Niño conditions are forecast to be similarly extreme and to result in 100-year flood events. Whilst rains are much needed, the rapid transition between La Nina and El Niño climatic conditions presents yet further humanitarian challenges for Somalia and Somalis.

The number of people facing high levels of acute food insecurity in Somalia is expected to reach 7.5 million by the end of the year. This includes 1.8 million children under the age of 5 who are acutely malnourished. The latest IPC/CH analysis is currently underway and will provide updated figures in September. However, it is clear that the risks of extreme rainfall and flooding to a population already severely affected by drought, food insecurity, and disease outbreaks are high. Flash flooding typically results in large-scale displacements of populations, with those already situated in overcrowded sites in makeshift shelters particularly vulnerable to the loss of life, assets, and disease outbreaks.

Overview of DG ECHO and EU response

- The European Union (EU) is one of the largest donors of humanitarian assistance to Somalia. In 2023, the EU has allocated EUR 180 million to address the food security crisis in Somalia. The EU's assistance is delivered through a variety of channels, including the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (DG ECHO), the European Development Fund (EDF), the Directorate General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA), and various EU Member States, notably

Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, and Sweden.

- DG ECHO's interventions in Somalia focus on providing food assistance, water and sanitation, health care, and shelter. DG 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. DG INTPA is also supporting a number of projects to improve food security in Somalia, such as the rehabilitation of irrigation systems and the promotion of drought-resistant crops.

Key recommendations and Policy/Advocacy messages

- Advocate for increased funding for humanitarian assistance to Somalia, with a focus on food insecurity and anticipatory action in advance of the forecast El Niño flooding.
- Ensure that humanitarian assistance is delivered in a principled, timely and efficient manner. Operational improvements on integrated programming and hard-to-reach areas should be supported to deliver at scale by making the most of inter-operable registration and assistance systems between major responders (WFP and IOM).
- Continue the focused scale up of the health, water, sanitation, hygiene, and nutrition services as those sectors have been identified as the main drivers of excess mortality and will continue to be so over the coming months.

3.2.6. South Sudan

Current situation and evolution from last report

Food insecurity in South Sudan remains extremely high, affecting about two-thirds of the population. It was projected that 7.8 million people were severely food-insecure at the peak of the lean season between April and July in 2023. Of these, 43 000 people were classified to be facing the worst form of severe food insecurity (IPC/CH Phase 5). Moreover, more than 1.4 million children face acute malnutrition. This makes South Sudan's one of the countries with the worst food insecurity emergencies in the world (Global Report on Food Crises, 2023)

Since its start, the conflict in Sudan generated direct repercussions in South Sudan. As of end of August 2023, 244 000 people have crossed into South Sudan, adding an extra layer of acutely food insecure population. The food security outcomes will likely deteriorate for returnees and host communities as they face significant food consumption gaps, and resort to negative coping mechanisms. The conflict in Sudan is also disrupting cross-border trade flows and market functionality. Trade flows between Sudan and South Sudan have been impacted, with a 47% decline in the amount of sorghum (critical staple food) traded in the second quarter of 2023 compared to the first quarter. The reduced imports from Sudan contributed to a rise in the south Sudanese food basket cost.

The first crop season production outcomes in southern and western areas are mixed. In some areas, poor distribution of the first season rains (March-May) reduced or delayed the harvests. In the rest of the country, the June to September main rainy season also shows below-average cumulative rainfall, particularly in the Centre and southeast. Availability of pasture and livestock products have increased in most pastoral and agro-pastoral livelihood areas due to the slight improvement in rainfall performance during the first half of July 2023.

The dire food insecurity situation in South Sudan continues to be driven by the cumulative effects of recurrent climate shocks, particularly floods and dry spells, conflicts and economic downturns. These recurrent shocks have led to large crop production deficits, erosion of household assets, massive displacements and high and rising staple food prices amidst limited income-earning opportunities.

Protracted displacement continues for more than 2.2 million people, many of whom are unable to return to areas of origin hence faced with a dire limitation of livelihood opportunities. Continued currency depreciation and the price inflation of food and other essential commodities, mainly due to the exacerbation of food prices further diminishing the purchasing

power of poor households.

Additionally, 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 continues to affect market prices and further diminishing the purchasing power of the already food insecure populations.

Food insecurity forecast

Overall flood extent in the remaining period of the rainy season is expected to be lower than in the past two years based on rainfall forecasting. However, the projected El Niño event in the Horn of Africa, which also impacts on the southern parts of the country, will likely have a negative knock-on effect, exacerbating impact on the flood situation in South Sudan along the Blue, whose water levels are already high.

Overview of DG ECHO and EU response

- DG ECHO 2023 HIP has a budget of EUR 82.2 million, of which about 25% is allocated to food assistance and basic needs. Due to the magnitude of needs compared to resources available, DG ECHO finances emergency food assistance in areas classified as IPC/CH phases 4 and 5, which are the most severe phases of food insecurity. The Rapid Response Mechanism implemented by a consortium of International NGOs has been used to address the situation of urgent needs consequence of the population movement across the border with Sudan.
- According to OCHA the 2023 HRP is only funded at 46%; the Food Security and Livelihoods (FSL) sector is funded at 51%, and the nutrition sector at 45%. The WFP, the main food assistance partner, is only funded at 52% against the 2023 financial plan. Of the 7.7 million facing acute food insecurity, WFP in July provided assistance to 2.7 million people leaving a huge gap of unmet food needs. In view of increased needs and continued influx of returnees and refugees from Sudan, UNHCR/IOM led an emergency response plan is underway.

Key recommendations and policy/advocacy messages

- This food crisis continues to be severely underfunded.
- To increase the efficiency of the humanitarian aid systems where a large amount of the budget is spent on the logistics related to delivery or in-kind supplies for both food and non-food items, there is need to:
 - Enhance the coordination and collaboration efforts in advancing the cash modality which has shown more positive evidence on effectiveness and cost-efficiency. Explore nexus opportunities with development actors wherever feasible and reinforce coordination with development donors to scale-up long-term investments on agriculture, basic services, and infrastructures.
 - Reinforce on collective diplomatic advocacy towards the Government of South Sudan to enforce law and reduce violence which hinders humanitarian access but also populations' access to livelihoods.

3.2.7. Uganda

Current situation and evolution

A partial IPC/CH analysis was released in June 2023, only covering Karamoja sub-region. The analysis shows a worsening of the situation for those affected by high levels of acute food insecurity. In 2023, 582 000 people were reported in IPC/CH phase 3 or above compared to 518 000 people in 2022. Moderate malnutrition in Karamoja has remained constant, while severe malnutrition has decreased by 14%.

The IPC/CH analysis for refugee settlements and refugee hosting areas is currently ongoing and will be reported in the next edition. With the largest food ration cut in the region, WFP post-distribution monitoring reports have been pointing at a constant deterioration of the food security situation for refugees. WFP reports 36% of refugees having an acceptable food consumption score, compared to 55% in June 2022. Diet diversity score has also worsened with 25% of households, having an inadequate diet diversity, and most of the time they consume three or less food groups, compared to 10% in June 2022.

Refugees are also increasingly employing negative coping mechanisms with about half of refugee households using one or more consumption-based negative coping strategies to manage the high level of inadequate food consumption compared to about 1/3 in 2022. Movements of refugees to Kenya on the ground that food rations have not been reduced to the same level have been reported. Movements to Ugandan urban centres on the same grounds have also been reported but to a lesser extent. as a consequence of reduced food rations.

In June 2023, food prices were 24% to 42% higher than last June in 2022 and 19 to 115% above the five-year average, limiting food access. The situation marginally improved with the seasonal decrease in food prices, which has likely contributed to the continued decline in headline inflation, which hit a 15-month low in July at 3.9%, down from 10.4% in January. Food inflation also continued to decrease in July, largely due to the first season harvest, but still doubles (8-9.3%) that of core inflation.

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. With the introduction of the new food assistance prioritisation system commenced in July 2023, 14% of the refugee population, categorised as highly vulnerable, receive 60% of General Food Assistance (GFA) ration. However, 25% of the refugee population should have been classified as highly vulnerable, while resource constraint has forced WFP to cap the number of highly vulnerable refugees, pushing 11% of refugees into critical situations. The moderately vulnerable refugees receive only 30% of GFA ration, which is very little and the lowest rations in the region. The least vulnerable households will not receive GFA from the July 2023 cycle.

Concerning the drivers, conflict in neighbouring countries causes a continuous influx of refugees from South Sudan and DRC (over 36 000 new refugees in first half of 2023). 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. In terms of economic shocks, while core inflation has reduced to the lowest level since Russian's war of aggression against Ukraine, food inflation remains at least double of that and food prices remain considerably higher than previously. Transport cost has stabilised with fuel prices decreasing. Finally, severe under-resourcing for food assistance is the main driver of food insecurity for refugees, compounded with further cuts to life-saving assistance, such as health and nutrition.

Food insecurity forecast

The situation is expected to improve in the projection period, reducing the number of people in IPC/CH phase 3 and above to 342 000 from September 2023 to February 2024. People in Emergency (IPC/CH phase 4) are currently at 102 000, compared to 90 000 in 2022 and is expected to reduce to half (48 000 people) in the projection period till February 2024

Overview of DG ECHO and EU response

- As part of the Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP) for 2023, DG ECHO allocated for Uganda EUR 30.5 million of which EUR 5 million has been allocated and contracted for food assistance through cash modality to WFP and EUR 4 million for multi-purpose cash assistance through the Danish Refugee Council.
- As of mid-2023, as part of the Uganda Country Refugee Response Plan for 2023, food assistance financial requirement is funded to 28% with a gap of USD 203.4 million.

Key recommendations and policy/advocacy messages

- 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.

3.2.8. Zimbabwe

Current situation and evolution from last report

Following the latest national crop assessment stating an overall increase of 59% in food crops production in the 2022/2023 summer season, the country has enough cereals to meet its requirement.. According to the 2023 Urban ZimVAC, over 1.5 million people (29% of urban households) are facing food insecurity in 2023.

In cities, volatile economic conditions with hyperinflation, rising food prices and currency depreciation are nudging already vulnerable populations to their very limit. The 2023 Urban ZimVAC showed that close to 30% of the city dwellers are unable to meet their food consumption needs.

In July, the official and parallel market ZWL to USD exchange rates declined by about 30% compared to June, following several government measures to stabilize the local currency. In July, ZIMSTAT reported that the cost of one month's worth of food and non-food needs increased by about 10%, a slight increase compared to the 130% increase in June. The high cost of living continues to constrain household purchasing power, particularly for households earning in ZWL.

Relative limited violence has occurred ahead of the 23 August 2023 national elections. But the contested results may trigger post elections violence.

The Zimbabwe current food crisis is driven by a protracted economic crisis, characterised by high inflation rates, that has sharply eroded the households' purchasing power. The situation is compounded by regular disease outbreaks including typhoid, cholera, and measles. Currently, the country is still dealing with an outbreak of cholera since the 12th of February 2023.

Food insecurity forecast

Despite positive developments, many families will be running out of stocks towards the end of the year. The 2023 Rural ZimVAC anticipates that over 2.7 million rural people will require emergency food assistance at the peak of the next lean season, in the first months of 2024.

The El Niño weather phenomenon is predicted to affect the forthcoming October 2023 to March 2024 rainfall season, likely causing reduced precipitation, which will lead to below average crop prospects for the 2024 harvest, inducing an earlier and harsher lean season.

Overview of DG ECHO and EU response ECHO interventions

- 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 settings. With IOM, EU humanitarian assistance also aims to support vulnerable migrant returnees, strengthen preparedness for displacement, and improve the management of mixed migration flows.
- The latest Financial Tracking Service (FTS) of OCHA reports an overall humanitarian aid funding for Zimbabwe in 2023 of USD 66.8 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.

Key recommendations and policy/advocacy messages

- 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.

- 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.

3.2.9. Sudan

Current situation and evolution from last report.

During the current lean season, 20.3 million people (42% of the population) are experiencing IPC/CH phase 3 or above, including 6.3 million in IPC/CH phase 4. This represents an increase of 8.6 million people compared to the same period last year. The states with the highest proportion of people in need of urgent action are those directly affected by the conflict, including West Darfur, Khartoum, South and North Kordofan, North, East, Central and South Darfur, as well as states hosting increased numbers of the new displaced IDPs: Red Sea, Blue Nile, Sinnar, etc.

The most affected groups are IDPs and those stranded in areas affected by direct fighting, whose livelihoods are directly affected by the impact of conflict. A total of 3 million children under five are estimated to be acutely malnourished in 2023 with 610 000 of them suffering from SAM. Sudan has reportedly the highest rate of child malnutrition globally. Sudan has been elevated to the list of highest concern countries in the GNFC Hunger Hotspots.

More than 4.5 million people have been displaced inside and outside Sudan due to the conflict that erupted on April 15 between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). The rate of displacement continues to be staggering, with nearly 1 million people displaced internally in July 2023 alone. Amidst the continued crisis, humanitarian assistance remains limited and exceedingly challenging given insecurity, bureaucratic impediments, looting, risks of aid diversion, and natural hazards.

The key food insecurity drivers are the ongoing conflict causing displacement, destruction of people's assets, limited access to income sources, lack of access to essential services, destruction of main food hubs and markets, road insecurity, isolation of the country's financial system and significant increase in prices of food items. Inflation rates continue to increase. Wheat flour prices increased significantly from SDG 706 per kg in April to SDG 1319 per kg as of July 2023.

The national average price of local food baskets reached SDG 594.5 in June–July 2023, compared to SDG 445 in April 2023. The average parallel exchange rate increased from SDG 550 per USD in April to SDG 710 per USD at the end of August 2023. This is attributed to an increase in demand for foreign currency to import inputs and goods.

The ongoing conflict is seriously affecting the 2023 summer cultivation season through insecurity and input shortages. Insecurity is the main constraint to agricultural operations in the Greater Darfur and Greater Kordofan regions, where impeding access to fields in several areas has resulted in reduced plantings, which will lead to a decrease in crop production and worsening the already deteriorated food security situation. Mechanised farming in areas less affected by conflict is facing an increase in the cost of agricultural inputs due to the collapse of the financial system.

Food insecurity forecast.

Food assistance needs through December 2023 are expected to remain exceptionally high in Sudan due to the ongoing conflict and the limited delivery capacity. Conflict will compound existing and projected trends, including additional forced displacement and substantial increases in the cost of food and fuel, furtherly limiting food, market, and humanitarian access.

Conflict is likely to disrupt food production, resulting in peaks in inter-communal violence, with potential for further militarisation and mobilisations along ethnic lines. Additionally, considering access constraints and the high reliance on imports from the Black Sea to meet the domestic wheat demand and weak domestic currencies, wheat availability and prices in Sudan are more likely to be influenced by international trade dynamics.

Failure of the cultivation season even for early maturing crops is likely to reduce the opportunities of agricultural labour, increasing the adoption of emergency coping strategies (selling of assets, lands, and animals).

Access to staple food commodities in Sudan will continue to be constrained by the destruction of main markets, significantly high prices, low purchasing power, and limited cash retrieval. The high transportation cost, either due to fuel scarcity or insecurity on some roads will further limit the affected population's access to food sources.

Overview of DG ECHO and EU response

- In total DG ECHO has made available EUR 126.4 million for Sudan, including an additional EUR 52 million since the outbreak of hostilities, of which about EUR 39 million (31%) is to respond to food security needs.
- DG ECHO remains active in all strategic, technical, and operational discussions linked to the Sudan context and contributes to food security and cash working group discussions.
- The EU also announced EUR 90 million of development funding to enhance food security and resilience of rural communities in Sudan as part of individual measures in favour of the Republic of the Sudan 2022. Programmes are still under negotiation and contractualisation and are focusing mostly on existing local (short) value chains including livestock, staple, fruit and protein-plants, whose sustainability (environmental, social and economic) will be improved in view of increasing resilience and enhancing profitability for smallholder producers.

Key recommendations and policy/advocacy messages

- Higher-level efforts are needed by the donor community to guarantee humanitarian access to hot spot areas. Humanitarian assistance can only be effective if safe, timely, and unhindered access for humanitarian operations is guaranteed by all stakeholders at all times and irrespective of a ceasefire, including in conflict-affected areas and in areas hosting refugees and returnees from Sudan.
- The scale up of a timely and integrated humanitarian assistance enhancing the access to the most urgent basic services (wash, health, nutrition and protection) particularly in IPC/CH Phase 3 and above locations, with a special focus on the most vulnerable individuals.

3.3. Middle East and North Africa (MENA)

3.3.1. Lebanon

Current situation and evolution from the last report

The IPC/CH exercise conducted in May 2023, reveals that 25% of the population in Lebanon (1.4 million people) face acute food insecurity between May and October 2023 (IPC/CH phase 3 or above). For the first time, the analysis differentiates between four groups, revealing a higher percentage of IPC/CH phase 3 or above for Syrian Refugees (36%); Palestine refugees from Syria (35%), and Palestine refugees in Lebanon (30%) compared to lower IPC/CH phase 3 or above for the Lebanese residents (21%).

Despite these still alarming high figures, the latest IPC/CH analysis shows some improvements compared to the previous one (September to December 2022) which marked 37% of the total population in IPC-CH phase 3 or above. Similarly, the percentage of population in IPC/CH phase 4 has dropped from 6% to 2%. In a dollarised economy, conditions have eased with improved USD access, more jobs, relatively better price stability, and scaled-up Humanitarian Food Assistance (HFA) benefiting over 2 million people and preventing further food security deterioration. However, the drivers of the four-year economic, political, and social crisis persist.

Inflation and currency depreciation continued to erode the purchasing power, especially for households with limited access to USD. In June 2023, Lebanon recorded the second-highest year-on-year food price inflation in the world (280%). May 2023 has recorded the highest rise (5%) of the monthly Consumer Price Index. From the third quarter of 2023, monthly food prices have started showing minimal changes.

During June 2023, the Lebanese pound (LBP) remained stable, however the LBP has lost 70% of its value between May 2022 and May 2023, and 98% since October 2019. The stabilisation of the exchange rate can be explained by the continued intervention by the central bank through the Sayrafa platform and the foreign currency from tourism.

Political instability, arising from the end of the presidential term in October 2022 and unsuccessful attempts to elect a new president, has deepened the food crisis. Lebanon is facing another leadership vacuum as the terms of the Governor of Banque du Liban ended in July 2023. The lack of political agreement to appoint a successor raises uncertainties over an already fragile system and further delays the implementation of economic reforms as highlighted by the IMF.

Concerning unemployment, while in the past year there has been a modest improvement in employment (men and women unemployment reduced from 35% to 27% and from 79% to 73% respectively), substantial challenges persist. Unemployment impacts about a quarter of the labour force, with women and youth facing higher rates. Syrian and Palestinian refugees face barriers to formal employment, relying on informal labour and aid.

Remittances account for 57% of the aggregate external resource flows (WB). The Lebanese population increasingly relies on remittances which have been representing 36% of GDP in 2022, up from 15% in 2019 (World Bank, 2023). However, the unequal distribution of remittances with the poorest benefitting less, and the vulnerability to external shocks remain a concern.

Food security forecast

The food security situation in Lebanon is anticipated to remain fragile due to several interconnected factors. Continued economic dollarisation, while contributing to price stability, is expected to keep purchasing power exceedingly low for those receiving Lebanese Pounds (LBP) as income, exacerbating food insecurity. The country's political instability and the breakdown of its banking system further cast doubt on its ability to maintain a stable exchange rate. This instability, coupled with inadequate adjustment of transfer values to match the rising cost of living, results in a disparity between assistance and actual needs.

Food assistance programmes, including those by the Ministry of Social Affairs, play a crucial role in stabilizing food security. However, they only cover around 50% of caloric requirements, leaving many people vulnerable. In addition, the dependence on external financial support is paramount to ensure the continuity of these programmes, and they may struggle to meet the increasing demand for assistance without sufficient international commitment.

Advocacy for financial support, improved coordination, and the flexibility to adjust transfer values in response to changing economic conditions will be essential to address the food security needs of vulnerable populations in Lebanon.

Overview of DG-ECHO and EU response

- DG ECHO has allocated EUR 60 million to Lebanon for 2023. EUR 30.7 million is used to fund 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 2023). The European Union, Germany, and the United States of America are the most significant donors to WFP in Lebanon.

Key recommendations and policy/advocacy messages.

- Strengthening strategic cash coordination in Lebanon is paramount. Harmonization of cash programming to improve efficiency and effectiveness of aid programming in Lebanon.

- The fluid macroeconomic and financial environment necessitates an in-depth risk mapping and scenario setting under strategic cash leadership.
- The urgent need for humanitarian action to prevent further deterioration of food security persists. Address refugee and Lebanese SMEBs differences and how to effectively implement a program that causes no harm. Improve targeting and review the TV addressing the need to remain meaningful to the most vulnerable.
- 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.

3.3.2. Syria

Current situation and evolution from last report

After 12 years of conflict, Syrians have now exhausted their savings and resilience. In February 2023, a devastating earthquake hit the country and caused critical additional suffering. While humanitarian assistance to help vulnerable families has never been so crucial, the 2023 Syria HRP for the Food Security & Agriculture Cluster is funded only at 27.7% (63% in 2022), leaving a funding gap of USD 1.5 million. In July 2023, WFP was forced to discontinue their food assistance to 2.5 out of the 5.5 million people who had relied on their assistance each month, due to unprecedented funding shortfalls. Additionally, the lack of funding in early recovery interventions is increasing the vulnerability of local communities and further reducing their fragile resilience capacity to future shocks and multiple hazards such as earthquake, floods, drought, conflicts, etc.

According to the HNO 2023 (published prior to the February earthquake) it is estimated that, in 2023, 15 million people or 68% of the population will need some form of food assistance. At least 12.1 million people are estimated to be food insecure, including 2 million people living in camps, and 12% of households are adopting severe negative coping strategies. 2.9 million people are at risk of sliding into hunger if the crisis continues to worsen. While widespread, the prevalence of food insecurity is highest in Idlib, Quneitra and Al-Raqqa, Aleppo, Deir Ezzor, Al-Hasakeh and Hama.

Malnutrition is on the rise with stunting rates among children reaching 28% in some parts of the country, and maternal malnutrition prevalence up to 25% in the Northeast.

Between April 2022 and July 2023, WFP reduced its in-kind food ration, leading to beneficiaries receiving approximately 1 000 kcal/day/person (48% of the Sphere standard). Since August 2023, WFP reduced further in-kind food ration to approximately 500 kcal/day/person. The *cash for food* is also reduced to USD 20 per household per month (69% reduction compared to 2022). Reduced rations and suspension of assistance are dangerously becoming the new norm. The food security actors inevitably will no longer be able to meet the standards of humanitarian food assistance, subsequently leading to critical levels of malnutrition and impoverishment.

Areas controlled by the Government of Syria (GoS) rely on Russia for their wheat supply. The depreciation of the local currency, combined with other economic stressors such as fuel and electricity shortages, has resulted in a critical 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's food assistance delivered cross-border, which is heavily dependent on imports transiting through Türkiye, many of which originate in Ukraine or Russia. As the UN Security Council resolution mandating cross-border assistance, was not extended in July 2023, the capacity of humanitarian actors to plan their long-term procurements is now limited.

The drivers for the food crisis in Syria are political conflict, economic collapse, the Lebanon financial crisis, the Russian invasion of Ukraine and damaged infrastructure. Moreover, Syria is

facing one of its worst water crises, severely impacting the population’s access to both drinking and irrigation water, driving agricultural yields to historic lows.

Food insecurity forecast

In North-West 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.

Further deterioration in the food insecurity situation, with massive falls in the exchange rate, will require substantial support from the international community to prevent a humanitarian disaster.

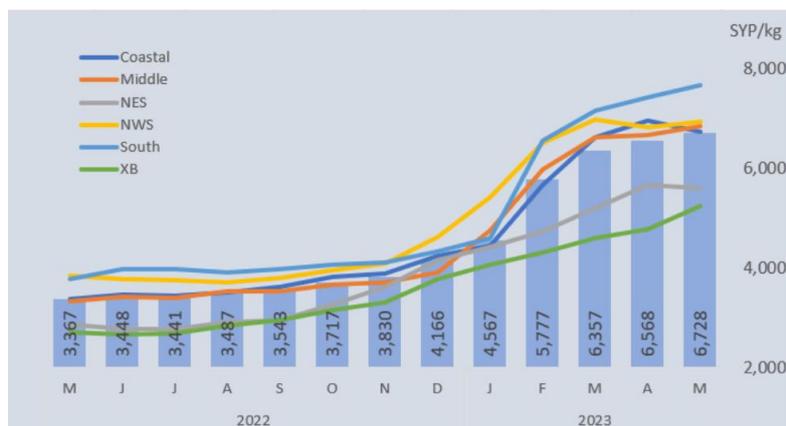
Overview of DG ECHO and EU response

- By September 2023, more than EUR 170 million has been allocated to Syria. Approximately 55% of the total budget is contributing directly to food security: in-kind food distributions, cash assistance, and livelihoods.
- 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 June 2023, the EU organised the 7th Brussels Conference on Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region, to mobilise funds and bring attention to the deteriorating Syrian crisis, aggravated by a degraded economic situation and the consequences of the earthquake that hit the country on the 6th of February.
- DG NEAR: additional allocation of EUR 10 million for food/livelihoods.

Key recommendations and policy/advocacy messages

- 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 SYP) as of May 2023



Source: WFP MARKET PRICE WATCH BULLETIN

3.3.3. Yemen

Current situation and evolution from last report

Yemen remains at risk of famine, with 17 million people facing high levels of acute food insecurity, including 6.1 million people classified in IPC/CH phase 4 (October-December 2022). This is still very high, even if a slight improvement in the food security situation compared with the previous years should be noticed, as IPC/CH phase 5 (“catastrophe”) has been – to date - reversed and prevented. This slight improvement was also reflected in the IPC/CH analysis done in 2023 for the Internationally Recognised Government (IRG) controlled areas, where 3.2 million people were classified as IPC/CH phase 3 or above from January to May 2023 compared with 4 million people from October to December 2022.

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, and by 12% in the areas under control of Ansar Allah. However, since January 2023, the price of wheat decreased closer to the levels observed before the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The problem for the most vulnerable is not availability but affordability of wheat. Russia’s recent termination of the grain deal might have an impact on Yemen, though not as big as initially foreseen, as the country has been able to diversify its wheat imports.

The Yemen crisis is still significantly underfunded, with the 2023 appeal funded 31.2% only, the lowest coverage of a Yemen appeal since the start of the crisis. The Food Security & Agriculture Cluster is funded at 30% (54.2% in 2022) leaving a funding gap of USD 1.5 billion.

Food insecurity forecast

For the period June to December 2023, it is projected that 3.9 million people will be food insecure in IRG controlled-areas, worsening again to end-of-2022 levels. In sum, despite reported improvements, Yemen remains one of the most food insecure countries in the world and the positive developments should be viewed as a temporary reprieve.

The funding gap is forcing the WFP to further ration cuts, which are dangerously becoming the new norm. The food security actors inevitably will no longer meet the standards of humanitarian food assistance leading to critical levels of malnutrition and impoverishment.

Restrictions and obstructions of access to services and assistance are major aggravating factors for the functioning of the humanitarian response and the private sector.

Overview of DG ECHO and EU response

- DG ECHO allocated 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 took place in Brussels on 23rd of May 2023. It took stock of the humanitarian situation in Yemen, assessed its evolution since the fourth SOM on 23 June 2022, and identified recommendations to address the challenges to continue delivering collectively principled aid, including vis a vis the food insecurity.

Key recommendations and policy/advocacy messages

- 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.

3.4. Latin America and Caribbean

3.4.1 Central America

Current situation and evolution from last report

The region is currently impacted by El Niño, which started in June 2023 and is forecasted to persist until February 2024, with an above-moderate strength expecting to generate severe drought in Central America, particularly in Guatemala and Honduras (ACAPS)⁷. The dry conditions can affect the main season of maize and bean crops, which account for a significant percentage of the region's food production. This will further increase prices and acute food insecurity in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua (FAO/WFP).

According to the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET)⁸ analysis, the poorest rural households suffer the highest impacts of above-average prices for food, transportation, and other living expenses, and below-average income. In addition, the sub-region remains affected by the mid-term impacts of several hurricanes between 2020 and 2022, the COVID-pandemic and the inflation rates caused by the war in Ukraine.

The resulting high levels of acute food insecurity in the Central American Dry Corridor are of major concern, with coping capacities of the poorest people steadily decreasing, who are thus implementing survival mechanisms, from restricting consumption to migration or the sale of productive assets. Most rural areas in Central America are expected to remain in IPC/CH phase 2 amid decreased agricultural labour opportunities and unusually high food prices during the lean season, while the most vulnerable people will be in IPC/CH phase 3.

According to the HNO 2023, 9.3 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance in northern Central America. Of those, 1.1 million people in El Salvador, 4.6 million people in Guatemala (410 000 are in IPC/CH phase 4)⁹ and 2.6 million in Honduras are food insecure (OCHA). Figures for Nicaragua are unknown, but the country remains of concern.

The situation in Guatemala is particularly worrisome as food insecurity has known a 6-fold increase since 2013 and affects 24% of its population, while the government indicates they only have the capacity to respond to some 600 000 people. In addition, around 47% of children under 5 are being affected by chronic malnutrition (UNICEF). This is the highest rate in Latin America and is the sixth highest rate of stunting in the world (WFP, MdM)¹⁰.

The main needs are food assistance, multi-purpose cash, and supplementary nutrition for children under 5, as for pregnant and lactating women. In addition, they need livelihoods' protection and recovery.

⁷https://www.acaps.org/fileadmin/Data_Product/Main_media/20230725_ACAPS_Thematic_report_El_Niño_overview_and_ticipated_humanitarian_impact_in_2023.pdf.

⁸ <https://fewsn.net/latin-america-and-caribbean/key-message-update/may-2023>.

⁹ <https://reliefweb.int/report/guatemala/latin-america-caribbean-weekly-situation-update-3-july-2023>

¹⁰ <https://reliefweb.int/report/guatemala/malnutrition-guatemala-devastating-children>.

Overall, main drivers in the region for food insecurity are both structural and systemic deficiencies, but also chronic violence and climate change (26% population is at high climate risk). The purchasing power of households also continues to be negatively affected by international trends, such as the ripple effects of the Russian invasion of Ukraine causing high prices in fertilisers and transport, the loss of jobs and income and the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Food insecurity forecast

El Niño, with its expected reduction of precipitation which may produce droughts that severely disrupt agricultural practices, undermine food production and increase levels of food insecurity and malnutrition for children and families living in the area, in a context of already decreased access to food and safe water. The regions most affected are those where food supply is mostly dependent on importation amid domestic markets highly sensitive to worsening exchange rates

Maize and bean prices continue to be above the five-year average. It is expected that they will continue to rise according to seasonality, limiting household purchasing power. The continuation of the high prices of fertilizers, paired with erratic rainfall and likely below-average rainfall and above-average temperatures in the coming months are expected to negatively affect the establishment and development of crops for subsistence farmers.

Overview of DG ECHO and EU response

In its interventions, DG ECHO focuses on the Dry Corridor, particularly Guatemala and Honduras. It provides food assistance, 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.

- Two projects are funded under the SEAR allocation of 2022, focusing on Guatemala and Honduras, one with Oxfam (EUR 2 million) and one with (EUR 3 million).
- Under the DP budget line, an anticipatory action is being implemented by FAO, in collaboration with the German Red Cross.

The EU Delegation is funding several projects:

- At regional level, the Information Systems Program for the Resilience of Food and Nutrition Security in the SICA Region (PROGRESAN-SICA) for EUR 6 million, and the AGRO-INNOVA for the adaptability of agro-forestry systems for EUR 6 million.
- In Nicaragua, the Boosting Rural and urban Economy in Times of Crisis and Beyond (BOOST) for EUR 15 million, and the Climate Resilience of Rural Households in the Dry Corridor, for EUR 13 million.
- In Guatemala, the Integral approach to build resilience in communities vulnerable to food insecurity and climate shocks (PRO-RESILIENCE, WFP, EUR 15 million), the Support to the Primary Health System to fight Chronic Malnutrition in Guatemala (PAHO, EUR 20 million). Also, EUR 14 million are allocated to strengthen the budgetary execution at institutional level and public policy implementation capacities of the Ministries responsible for the fight against malnutrition and the institutional capacity of the Ministry of Finance.

Key recommendations and policy/advocacy messages

- The food security crisis in Central America becomes increasingly underfunded. Additional funding from DG ECHO and other donors should address the food security in the region.
- As funding is limited, partners are requested to further prioritise and target the most vulnerable individuals (IPC/CH phase 4).
- Common advocacy needs to ensure that the humanitarian space is maintained. It becomes increasingly difficult to obtain data in the region. Both Nicaragua and El

Salvador block the official publication of food security data.

- 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.
- The nexus for shock-responsive social protection and Anticipatory action, as well as the coordination between DP programs, Euroclima and resilience building programs, should be further improved.

3.4.2. Colombia

Current situation and evolution from last report

In 2022, about 13% of Colombian population were estimated to have food security related humanitarian needs but according to the latest WFP data, nowadays more than 30% of the population is food insecure as a result of the accumulated impacts of the ongoing conflicts, climate shocks, the impact of COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine. 16.8 million people (15.5 million Colombians and 1.3 million Venezuelans) have insufficient access to and/or inadequate consumption of food. Of the 15.5 million food insecure Colombians, 2.1 million are severely food insecure and 13.4 million are moderately food insecure. The Afro-descendant and indigenous populations experience higher levels of food insecurity - 42% and 40%, respectively - as well as female-headed households (36%), compared to male-headed households (27%). Regarding the Venezuelan migrant and refugee population, people in transit and those accessing the country on a pendular basis are by far the most affected.

In early July 2023, the Government of Colombia declared an Economic, Social and Ecological Emergency in la Guajira department to tackle preventable deaths amongst children and women. According to the health authorities, as of 29 July, 195 probable deaths due to acute malnutrition in children under five have been reported at country level, 113 were confirmed, 27 were ruled out and 55 are under study, for a mortality rate of 3.05 cases per 100 000 children under five. Of the probable deaths, 20% occurred in La Guajira (39 deaths)

Also, according to DANE, in 2022, La Guajira reached a higher prevalence of moderate and severe food insecurity in households: above 59.7 %, which translates into nearly 60 out of every 100 households in the department had difficulty accessing quality food in sufficient quantities due to lack of economic resources and other factors. Food insecurity continues to affect a large part of the department's population. Difficulties in access to food and drinking water, low coverage of basic services such as health and the disproportionate impact of the El Niño phenomenon, compared to other regions of the country, suggests that the humanitarian situation in La Guajira will worsen in the coming months.

Food insecurity forecast

According to a recent OCHA report, IDEAM forecasts heavy rains in La Guajira as a result of the hurricane season, simultaneously with the dry season and high temperatures due to the development of the El Niño phenomenon. According to Food Security cluster, 22 millions of people in Colombia will be food insecure because of El Niño whilst 23 700 children under 5 are projected to suffer from acute malnutrition. La Guajira department will be the most affected, with 896 900 food insecure people (which represents 86% of the department's total population) and 2 352 acutely children.

The control of illegal economies by armed non state actors (ANSAs), particularly near the border areas with Venezuela and the Caribbean Sea, together with the worrying rates of maternal and child health, food insecurity and the impact of the El Niño phenomenon, exacerbates the humanitarian situation in La Guajira department. The Ombudsman's Office¹¹, warns of a staggering increase in the number of selective homicides, extortion, threats against human rights defenders and social leaders and cases of recruitment and use of children and

¹¹ [Early Alert 025-2023](#)

adolescents, particularly indigenous, migrants and refugees.

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.

Overview of DG ECHO and EU response

- 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%).
- Currently, seven ECHO partners have a presence in La Guajira: UNICEF, WFP, German Red Cross, Caritas, DRC, Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe and Humanity and Inclusion (HI); some of these implement actions on the ground through national organizations such as the Colombian Red Cross, Pastoral Social, and Halu Foundation, respectively. Although ECHO partners are monitoring the situation and covering needs in health, food security and nutrition, among others, the limited resources cannot fill the gap.

Key recommendations and policy/advocacy messages

- 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, food security, nutrition response to economic inclusion, support from social protection systems and documentation from development programs).
- Advocacy for the continuity and the expansion of food security and nutrition assessment particularly in the context of El Niño and multiple affectation for the most vulnerable communities.
- Improve DG ECHO-funded project CASH response and particularly in the context of the rapid response mechanism (RRM).
- An immediate response in La Guajira is needed to address the crisis. DG ECHO calls for urgent action and coordinate efforts to mitigate the impact of the crisis, address the most urgent needs of the vulnerable population and contribute to the reduction and prevention of mortality. This will require the production of sound data and quality anticipatory analysis to assess the context, identify institutional gaps and leverage opportunities.

3.4.3. Haiti

Current situation and evolution from last report

Haiti, according to the 2023 Global Report on Food Crises, is the second country in the world with the highest percentage of population at IPC/CH phase 4 levels of food insecurity and one of 9 countries at risk of famine according to the latest Hunger Hotspots analysis. According to the last results of the IPC/CH for the period from August 2023 to February 2024, 4.35 million of people are at high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC/CH phase 4 and above), including 14% classified in IPC/CH phase 4 and 30% in IPC/CH phase 3. Overall, 5.2 million people require urgent humanitarian support, including nearly 3 million children.

The food crisis has been escalating since 2018, driven by years of recurrent natural disasters and weather extremes, COVID-19-related income losses, increasing food prices, violence, insecurity and below-average crop production. In seven metropolitan areas, out of the 194 000 IDPs (as of July 2023), about 40% have sought refuge in informal spontaneous sites across the capital due to violence, being exposed to protection risks, lacking basic services, livelihoods and food. IDPs vulnerability increases while facing exposure to violence between gangs and epidemics.

As per socio-economic factors, three consecutive years of economic recession and an inflation rate of 48% have added to the misery of the population. Haiti is one of the poorest countries in the world, with nearly 90% of Haitians living below the poverty line and nearly a third in extreme poverty.

A national SMART survey conducted in 2023 reveals that child malnutrition is on the rise: more than 115 600 children are estimated to suffer from severe wasting in 2023, a 30% increase compared to last year. There are concerns regarding pockets of acute malnutrition among children under five in some areas of the capital.

In Haiti, constraints to humanitarian activities are mainly related to gang-related violence, civil unrest and the expanding territorial control of gangs (which control 80% of the capital), which are blocking access to fuel and hamper humanitarian access to displaced population in urban areas of Port-au-Prince. Roads to the south of the country have been blocked since June 2021. Extended demonstrations, looting and violence can disrupt the implementation of operations and jeopardise international presence in the country. Disrupted logistic capacities during and in the immediate aftermath of disasters can make assessments and response difficult everywhere in the country.

Food Insecurity Forecast

The most recent GNFC Hunger Hotspots report, forecasting trends from June to November 2023, classified Haiti for the first time as a hunger hotspot of the highest concern. For the period from March to June 2023, it was estimated that 4.43 million of people would be acutely food insecure, including 14% classified in IPC/CH phase 4 .

The main concern remains the evolution of the situation of violence, the hurricane season and the possible impact of El Niño (as in 2015–2016, the last El Niño-induced drought led to the loss of 50% of Haiti's crops)

Overview of DG ECHO and EU response

- 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.
- Additional EUR 10 million funding to the HIP 2023 has been approved in July 2023 for Haiti acute humanitarian crisis from DG ECHO, this funding aims to address food crisis through food assistance and nutrition responses, also including protection and logistics support.

Key recommendations and policy/advocacy messages

- Advocating with other services and donors for increased engagement in Haiti
- 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 action.

3.4.4. Venezuela

Current situation and evolution from last report

Due to the difficulties for accessing food as a consequence of the economic crisis, HumVenezuela (September 2022¹²) estimate that 12.3 million are food insecure including 2.1 million are severely food insecure. Furthermore, 18.7 million have lost or seen irreversible depletion of their livelihoods and 15.4 million depended on vouchers, remittances or the help of third parties for having lost all or most of their sources of income.

According to the latest UNICEF report on the nutritional status of children under 5 years of age, carried out in 20 of 24 states in Venezuela until August 2022, the states with the highest rate of acute malnutrition are Cojedes with 24.1%, Yaracuy with 17.4%, Falcón with 11.7%. The rates in some municipalities of the country reach levels of 48.2% (Cojedes) 37.3% (Falcón) 34.5% (Miranda) 32.6% (Zulia) 33.3% (Barinas) 30.1% (Apure) 24% (Mérida) 16.6% (Delta Amacuro).

According to figures from the Venezuelan Finance Observatory, the Venezuelan economy entered a new recessive cycle. The Monthly Index of Economic Activity indicator denoted a fall of 7.6% during the first quarter of 2023 and 6.3% in the second quarter. The prices of the services sector increased 19.5%. Transportation rose 9.1%, education 8.0% and food 7%. This occurred in a context where public sector wages and pensions have remained frozen. Inflation in Venezuela in June 2023 was 8.5%, the accumulated inflation rose to 100.8% and the annualized climbed to 429%.

Venezuelan migrants and refugees displaced abroad are estimated at 7.3 million people as of January 2023. Of these, 1.56 million are targeted for food security responses in 2023 (Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan, RMRP - Plataforma de Coordinación Interagencial para Refugiados y Migrantes, R4V – 2023).

Concerning the drivers of food insecurity, the war in Ukraine added to pre-existing political and economic factors that have weakened the livelihoods of the population, exacerbating the crisis. Increasing insecurity and violence due to the conflicts between armed groups continue to affect food insecurity. Also, 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. Lack of financing and sufficient income, increased fuel prices, as well as limited access to seeds also have a negative impact on livelihood and cost of living.

Food insecurity forecast

In Venezuela, according to forecasts issued by the National Institute of Meteorology and Hydrology (INAMEH), the El Niño phenomenon is estimated to remain present until the first quarter of 2024, resulting in unusual meteorological patterns. This is likely to have a significant impact on the most vulnerable communities, particularly between July to September 2023.

Overview of DG ECHO and EU response

- The HIP 2023 allocation doesn't have a specific focus on the response to the current food crisis, due to the high level of need.
- At the end of 2022, EUR 30 million were allocated to respond to basic needs inside Venezuela and to Venezuelan migrants' acute needs outside of Venezuela.
- 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.

¹² latest information available

Key recommendations and policy/advocacy messages

- Need to address the important funding gap for the Humanitarian Response Plan
- 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 is working in order 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.
- The impossibility of developing cash interventions in Venezuela for years prevents reaching a greater number of people in need.

3.5. Asia and Pacific

3.5.1. Afghanistan

Current situation and evolution from last report

Food security continues to remain at critical levels in Afghanistan. The latest GNFC Hunger Hotspots report includes Afghanistan as a hunger hotspot of highest concern with populations at risk of famine. Afghanistan has an INFORM Risk Index of 8.1, making it the fourth most at-risk country for humanitarian crises and disasters.

For the first time since the Taliban takeover, the latest (April 2023) IPC/CH analysis, indicated a slight decline of the number of IPC/CH phase 3 and phase 4 in 33 out of 34 provinces. The number has decreased from 19.9 million (November 2022 to March 2023) to 17.2 million people (40% of the total population), of which 3.4 million are currently in IPC/CH phase 4.

The decline in the number of severely food insecure observed at the peak of the lean season (April) is largely driven by massive humanitarian assistance in 2022 (covering 27% of the population) and a decline of food prices.

Following this improvement, the number of people targeted by food assistance under the revised HRP 2023 was reduced by 10%. Concurrently, a 40% reduction of the food assistance requirement (from USD 2.6 billion to USD 1.57 billion) for the June to December, is indicated.

Concerning the drivers of food insecurity, the Taliban take-over in August 2021 started a new era 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.

The economic consequences of the ban on drugs, including the prohibition of poppy cultivation, are still difficult to determine but are expected to adversely affect farmers' livelihoods and income.

Drought and localized rapid on-set disasters have been major causes of widespread food insecurity and increasing rural and urban poverty.

Economic factors also play an important role. Due to the high food prices, the Food Security and Agriculture Cluster food basket percentage of transfer value decreased in January and February 2023, diluting the purchasing power of benefitting households. High-levels of unemployment and sustained inflation have driven the average household's debt to increase six-fold since 2019.

On a positive note, the World Bank economic report indicates a continued appreciation of the Afghani against major currencies from January to August 2023.

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 winter and difficult access to fodder.

Food insecurity forecast

In the projected period (May and October 2023), a slight seasonal improvement is expected, with the number of people in IPC/CH Phase 3 or above likely decreasing to around 15.3 million, including nearly 2.8 million people in IPC/CH Phase 4.

While El Niño forecasts suggest an improvement in the next wheat production, national deficits between 30-35% are projected. However, higher risk of hydrometeorological events and wetter conditions may favour multiplication of locusts in the north and north-eastern regions which account for 35% of national wheat production, and significantly affect agricultural production.

However, the marginal improvements will likely be undermined by the continued macroeconomic instability, increasing prices of commodities, decreasing livelihood opportunities, rising unemployment, decreasing remittances and consecutive drought conditions. Women in Afghanistan and particularly women headed households are more exposed to additional vulnerabilities to food insecurity due to restrictive laws on movements.

Food security saw reduced targeting in 2023, leading to the cutting of 8 million food insecure Afghans from receiving assistance, including households in IPC/CH phase 4 and 1.4 million mothers and children. WFP projects a further decline in funding, and coverage of assistance will reach roughly 8% of the national population. The precarious funding scenario compounded by the drivers mentioned above implies enormous pressure on the most vulnerable households for the remainder of 2023.

Overview of DG ECHO and EU response

- In 2023, DG ECHO allocated a total EUR 89 million out of which around 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.
- At the end of July 2023 only 9% of the 4.6 billion USD HRP was received, compared to 40% funded by the same period in 2022. Critical supplies for Emergency Shelter and NFI (non-food items), WASH and food assistance are at the brink of breakage due to precarious funding shortfalls.
- The Food Security and Agriculture Sector, requiring USD 1.57 billion shows the lowest contribution with only USD 230million covered, an alarmingly low percentage (14.6%), considering the massive needs and the associated risks should humanitarian food assistance be discontinued.

Key recommendations and policy and advocacy messages

- 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 1.57 billion are needed in 2023 to assist 19.1 million people across Afghanistan with HFA and livelihood support particularly in the upcoming long winter months which coincide with the seasonal lean period and increased agro-pastoral livelihoods.
- 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 phase 4 households

from 75% to 50% of a household's basic food needs and have further recently discontinued assistance to 8 million food insecure people and risks to discontinue assistance by the end of September if no funding is forthcoming.

- 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.

3.5.2. Myanmar

Current situation and evolution from last report

In Myanmar, reliable data and analysis has always been limited due to restrictions imposed by authorities on the implementation of food security and nutrition assessments. After the coup, outreach and assessments have become practically impossible.

However, from 2022, analysis has been benefiting from additional sources like REACH's Multi-Sector Needs Analysis (MSNA) and joint Food Security and Livelihood Assessment (FSLA) by FAO-WFP.

The Joint FSLA Round 6 assessment conducted in May 2023 has identified that overall trends of food insecurity are showing a slight deterioration from 22% food insecurity in January 2023 to 24% in Round 6. Chin, Kayah, Rakhine, Kayin and Magway experienced a higher prevalence of food insecurity compared to other areas. Food consumption scores deteriorated from 20% of household experiencing insufficient food consumption in Aug/Sep 2021 to 23% in Apr/May 2023. The proportion of households with insufficient diets increased from 24% in Aug/Sep 2021 to 26% in Aug/Sep 2022 in rural areas, and from 9% to 19% in urban areas.

The latest FAO GIEWS update (July 2023¹³) highlights that the current food insecurity situation is critical due to reduced agricultural production in 2022, intensified conflict, record high food prices and the devastating effects of Cyclone Mocha. Domestic prices of "Emata" rice, the most consumed variety in the country, were at record high levels as of May 2023, constraining access to a key staple food.

The conflict triggered record-high civilian displacements, currently estimated at 1.83 million people, a three-fold increase compared to the same period in 2022. The protracted political crisis is compromising the fragile conditions of vulnerable households and the Rohingya IDPs. Food insecurity could worsen if constrained access to fertilizer and intensified conflict persists, and if the forecast of below-average monsoon precipitation is realized, thus reducing cereal production in 2023.

The overwhelming majority (86% - 15.2 million) of the 17.6 million people in need of urgent humanitarian assistance will require food assistance. An additional 500 000 people affected by cyclone Mocha in May 2023 require food assistance for at least 6 months.

The main drivers behind the food crisis are conflict, lack of funding, macroeconomic fragility and a weak labour market. Conflict remains the main driver of food insecurity and lack of access to basic needs, to services and protection concerns. The de facto authorities extended the country's state of emergency for another six months and extended martial law to 47 Townships across the country on 2 February. Furthermore, de facto authorities restrict food and agricultural inputs supplies to main conflict areas, as an illegal method of warfare. Access to food and basic needs is particularly critical for both new and protracted IDPs.

in contrast to the growing needs, the Myanmar HRP remains the second worst-funded globally. Humanitarian needs have significantly increased from 2020 (almost 1 million

¹³ <https://www.fao.org/giews/en/>

persons) to 2023 (17.6 million persons, plus 500 000 Cyclone Mocha affected people), with a commensurate increase in humanitarian funding requirements from USD 275.3 million to USD 886.7 million.

As of August 2023, the Kyat (central bank's official rate) has depreciated by 58% against USD year-on-year. However, the depreciation on the informal market is closer to 125%. Retail food prices have risen steeply since the coup. The cost of a basic food basket is up almost 70% compared to one year ago (FAO FIEWS July 2023). The domestic prices of long grain "Emata" rice more than doubled from the already high levels of a year earlier.

The World Bank Economic monitor (June 2023)¹⁴ indicated stabilisation of the economic conditions in Myanmar in the first half of 2023. The labour market remains weak, with declining employment rates. Wages dropped by an average of 15% in real terms between 2017 and 2022.

Food insecurity forecast

Food insecurity is likely to continue to worsen as access to fertiliser and intensified conflict persist. Below-average monsoon precipitation is currently forecast, and if this materialises, cereal production will be reduced in 2023.

Regarding the economic drivers, soaring food inflation is creating a negative impact on populations relying on humanitarian assistance, as well as other vulnerable populations. Factors behind the surging price of rice and other basic foods include post-coup armed conflicts that have disrupted farming, the military arson attacks on numerous farming villages across rural Myanmar, inflation and depreciation of the kyat resulting in higher production and import costs. All are likely to continue in 2024.

Overview of DG ECHO and EU response

- In 2023, DG ECHO has allocated a total of EUR 24.6 million including an External Assigned Revenue contribution of EUR 816 000 from Luxembourg and EUR 2 million from ALERT funding instrument. DG ECHO contribution to food assistance will be mainly through support of WFP operations (EUR 5.15 million) and FLER (First Line Emergency Response) consortium. WFP still requires USD 35.4 million¹⁵ to cover its emergency relief programmes through to the end of 2023 (August to December).
- 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 1/2 of 2022 target) to other funding mechanisms, illustrating the increase in conflict-affected populations and related targeting. Food security is targeting 2.1 million people in 2023, while 15.2 million people need food assistance. Following Mocha cyclone, an additional USD 26.1 million is required for new additional caseload 500 000 cyclone affected people¹⁶. As of June 2023, the FSC had successfully reached 1.2 million beneficiaries, comprising for 46% of the annual targeted 2.6 million beneficiaries under both HRP and Flash Appeal. As of 29 August¹⁷, 17.7 % of total requirement for food sector is funded.

Key recommendations and policy/advocacy messages

- 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.

¹⁴ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/myanmar/publication/myanmar-economic-monitor-june-2023-a-fragile-recovery-key-findings>

¹⁵ WFP Myanmar update - 10 August 2023

¹⁶ <https://reliefweb.int/report/myanmar/myanmar-cyclone-mocha-flash-appeal-may-2023>

¹⁷ <https://fts.unocha.org/countries/153/summary/2023>

- 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 finalisation by all relevant actors of a joint 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 main funding sources for this strategy so far are INTPA and ECHO.

3.5.3. Pakistan

Current Situation and evolution from last report

The May 2022 GNFC Hunger hotspots report includes Pakistan among the hunger hotspots of high concern, with a high number of people facing critical acute food insecurity, coupled with worsening drivers that are expected to further intensify life-threatening conditions in the coming months.

The country is still reeling from the impact of the catastrophic floods during the 2022 monsoon season. The flooding affected 33 million people in almost one third of the country. The flooding came against the backdrop of important political uncertainties, 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. Cumulatively, these factors have impacted the cost of essential items, and hindered employment prospects.

The latest IPC/CH of April 2023 carried out in 43 districts of Sindh, Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces, indicates that nearly 10.57 million people (29% of the 36.7 million rural population analysed) are experiencing IPC/CH phase 3 and above. This comprises 2.1 million people (6%) in IPC/CH phase 4 between April and October 2023. The population analysed accounts for 16% of Pakistan total population.

As per the drivers behind food insecurity, 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.

Recurrent climatic shocks imply protracted impact on major crop production and livelihoods.

The 2022 floods resulted in decreased crop production impacting mainly rice, maize, sugarcane, cotton, pulses, and orchards impacting household food access and availability. Major rabi season crops, including wheat also reduced. Additionally, increased prices of agricultural and livestock inputs further hampered food production, in the flood affected areas.

The Flood Response Plan (FRP) for 2023 is 60.5% funded, however with the extension of the FRP until end of 2023 and still significant humanitarian needs, not taking into consideration new shocks, the level of funding remains low to ensure adequacy and effectiveness of the response.

On a cautious positive note, for the first time after months of rising inflation since the beginning of 2022, and peaking in April -May 2023, the annual year-on-year inflation rate slowed for the third straight month to 27.4% in August 2023, the lowest since January and down from 28.3% in July.

Additionally, food inflation posted the least increase in eight months (38.5% vs 42.94% in January), but with overall market prices remaining high. This continues to impact negatively on the purchasing power of the highly food insecure, low-income populations mainly daily labourers in the flood affected provinces.

Food insecurity forecast

The cumulative impact of the above factors suggests that vulnerable population will be affected by heightened risks of increased food insecurity and acute undernutrition. In the absence of adequate mitigation measures, the IPC/CH analysis projects worsening conditions between November and January 2024 where almost 11.81 million people (32% of the analysed population) will likely experience high levels of acute food insecurity.

Overview of DG ECHO and EU response

- For HIP 2023, DG-ECHO allocated EUR 16.5 million, of which roughly 50% to respond to unmet basic needs through multipurpose cash assistance. No forthcoming top ups are foreseen for the remainder of year.
- 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.

Key recommendations and policy/advocacy messages

- Significant humanitarian needs will continue throughout 2023, requiring an update and prolonged funding of the Flood Response Plan (FRP). The FSAWG reports a funding gap of USD 121 million or 45% for the food assistance and agriculture sectors of FRP. WFP reports having to reduce its food and cash assistance by 70% for the targeted 1.1 million flood affected beneficiaries in August 2023,
- The serious food security conditions will further deepen the gravity of the worrying trends of acute undernutrition for over 2.14 million acutely malnourished children under 5 years in the crisis affected areas.
- In addition 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.
- 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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