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WFP World Food Programme

Hunger Hotspots

FAO–WFP early warnings on acute food insecurity

November 2023 to April 2024 outlook

Global Network Against Food Crises

Integrated actions for lasting solutions

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Early warning hunger hotspots
November 2023 to April 2024

An icon applies both if the shock (e.g. dry conditions) is forecasted to take place during the forecast period or if the shock already occurred but will impact food security over the forecast period.

Displacement applies when it is a key driver of food insecurity or a significant factor underlying vulnerability. It applies to internally displaced people, migrants and refugees.

[1] This category includes hotspots already with populations in Catastrophe (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification [IPC]/Cadre Harmonisé [CH] Phase 5), as well as hotspots at risk of deterioration towards catastrophic conditions. At risk are those hotspots where an extremely vulnerable population in Emergency (IPC/CH Phase 4) is facing severe aggravating factors – especially access constraints – that indicate a further deterioration and possible occurrence of catastrophic conditions in the outlook period. Per definition, this category also includes hotspots with Famine or Risk of Famine.

[2] These are hotspots with sizeable populations – over 500 000 people – estimated or projected to be in Emergency (IPC/CH Phase 4) levels of acute food insecurity or identified as severely acute food insecure as per WFP's Consolidated Approach for Reporting Indicators of Food Security (CARI) or remote CARI (rCARI) methodology; or hotspots with more than 10 percent of the population analysed in Emergency (IPC/CH Phase 4) or severely acute food insecure, and at least 50 percent of the population analysed. In the included countries/territories, life-threatening conditions are expected to further intensify in the outlook period.

[3] Other countries/territories, in which acute food insecurity is likely to deteriorate further during the outlook period, and which were identified as hunger hotspots.

Source of data: FAO and WFP. 2023. *Hunger Hotspots analysis (November 2023 to April 2024)*. Rome. https://doi.org/10.4060/cc8419en. Source of map: United Nations. 2020. *Map of the World*. [Cited 9 October 2023]. www.un.org/geospatial/content/map-world

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Abbreviations

CARI	Consolidated Approach for Reporting Indicators of Food Security
CH	Cadre Harmonisé
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FDMN	Forcibly Displaced Myanmar National
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FEWS NET	Famine Early Warning Systems Network
GAM	global acute malnutrition
GDP	gross domestic product
GNAFC	Global Network Against Food Crises
GoY	Government of Yemen
HNO	Humanitarian Needs Overview
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
IDP	internally displaced person
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOD	Indian Ocean Dipole
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
NSAG	non-state armed group
SAM	severe acute malnutrition
SMART	Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions
rCARI	remote Consolidated Approach for Reporting Indicators of Food Security
UNHCR	United Nations Refugee Agency
WASH	water, sanitation and hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme

Executive summary

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) warn that acute food insecurity is likely to deteriorate further in 18 hunger hotspots – comprising a total of 22 countries or territories including 2 regional clusters – during the outlook period from November 2023 to April 2024.

Burkina Faso, Mali, South Sudan and the Sudan remain at the highest concern level. Palestine was added to the list of countries/territories of highest concern due to the severe escalation of conflict in October 2023. These hotspots have populations that are facing or projected to face starvation (Catastrophe, Integrated Food Security Phase Classification [IPC]/Cadre Harmonisé [CH] Phase 5) or are at risk of deterioration towards catastrophic conditions during the outlook period, given they have populations already facing critical food insecurity (Emergency, IPC/CH Phase 4) and are facing severe aggravating factors. These countries require the most urgent attention.

Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Haiti, Pakistan, Somalia, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen are hotspots of very high concern. All these hotspots have a high number of people facing or projected to face critical levels of acute food insecurity, coupled with worsening drivers that are expected to further intensify life-threatening conditions in the coming months.

Since the May 2023 edition, **Chad, Djibouti, the Niger, Palestine and Zimbabwe** have been added to the list of hunger hotspot countries/territories, while the countries in the Dry Corridor of Central America (**El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua**) and **Malawi** remain hunger hotspot countries. The countries/territories and situations covered in this report highlight the most significant deteriorations of hunger expected in the outlook period, **but do not represent all countries or territories with high levels of acute food insecurity**.

Armed violence, in particular the trend of increased civilian targeting, will likely continue to underpin the ongoing upward trajectory in global displacement. The ongoing hostilities in the Gaza Strip are expected to further intensify and exacerbate the already dramatic humanitarian implications for the population in the outlook period, with the risk of potentially wider regional implications. Instability and violence continue to surge in the Sahel region, from the recent coups in Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger to the unabating conflict in the Sudan affecting neighbouring countries like Chad. Between July and September 2023, the region accounted for 22 percent of all global fatalities generated by conflict. The requested withdrawal and ongoing drawdown of peacekeeping missions from Mali, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia could amplify security voids, permitting increased non-state armed group (NSAG) activities and attacks against civilians, and could cause constraints to humanitarian operations. Insecurity and conflicts are poised to exacerbate already restricted access to, and availability of, food – through displacement, the disruption of markets and livelihoods, and especially the reduction or abandonment of cultivated areas, contributing to deepening protracted food crises.

The situation is compounded by a sluggish global economic outlook for 2024 amid tight monetary policies, after global economic growth has decelerated in 2023. Although international food prices are generally declining, they remain high by historic standards, and are expected to come under increased upward pressure in the coming months due to oil price dynamics and the impact of El Niño conditions on agricultural production. In many low- and middle-income countries, persistent elevated commodity prices, weak currencies and depleted foreign-exchange reserves hamper the capacity to import goods of first necessity. Coupled with delays in price transmission and supply chain bottlenecks, these dynamics are contributing to a sharp rise in domestic food prices in several hotspots. Limited economic access is likely to be further compounded by the overall reduction in donor support to offset global hunger.

Ongoing or planned reductions and gaps in emergency agriculture, food and livelihood assistance affect several hunger hotspots of very high concern and highest concern, such as **Afghanistan**, **Haiti**, **Palestine**, **Somalia**, **the Syrian Arabic Republic** and **Yemen**, other hunger hotspots, such as **Malawi**, and countries or situations that require monitoring, such as **Uganda** and Cox's Bazar (**Bangladesh**).

Weather extremes, such as heavy rains, tropical storms, cyclones, flooding, drought and increased climate variability, remain significant drivers of acute food insecurity in some countries and regions. By September 2023, El Niño reached its peak of activity, with forecasts suggesting a very high likelihood for El Niño conditions persisting throughout the forecast period. This climatic shift has already had a negative impact on various regions, notably Southeast Asia and Latin America, and is anticipated to persist in the upcoming six months, notably affecting regions in East Africa, Southern Africa and Latin America. Continuous monitoring of forecasts and their impacts on production remains critical.

Urgent and scaled-up assistance is required in all 18 hunger hotspots to protect livelihoods and increase access to food. This is essential to avert a further deterioration of acute food insecurity and malnutrition. In the hotspots of highest concern, humanitarian actions are critical in preventing further starvation and death. However, humanitarian access is limited in various ways, including insecurity due to organized violence or conflict, the presence of administrative or bureaucratic impediments, and movement restrictions.

This report provides country-specific recommendations on priorities for emergency response, as well as anticipatory actions to address existing humanitarian needs and ensure short-term protective interventions before new needs materialize.

Introduction

For the outlook period of November 2023 to April 2024, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) are issuing an early warning for urgent humanitarian action in 18 hunger hotspots, comprising a total of 22 countries or territories including 2 regional clusters. In the hunger hotspots, parts of the population will likely face a significant deterioration of already high levels of acute food insecurity, putting lives and livelihoods at risk.

Identified through forward-looking analysis, these hotspots have the potential for acute food insecurity to rise significantly during the outlook period, under the effects of multiple overlapping drivers, interlinked or mutually reinforcing. These fall under the categories of conflict and organized violence, economic shocks, weather extremes and climate variability.

Targeted humanitarian action is urgently needed to save lives and livelihoods in all 18 hunger hotspots. In Burkina Faso and Mali, Palestine, South Sudan, and the Sudan, humanitarian action is critical to prevent starvation and death.

To this end, the present report provides country-specific recommendations on priorities for:

- anticipatory action – short-term protective interventions to be implemented before new humanitarian needs materialize; and
- emergency response – actions to address existing and emerging humanitarian needs.

Rationale for the inclusion of anticipatory action recommendations

Anticipatory actions are short-term disaster risk management interventions implemented during the critical time window between an early warning trigger – the point in time when forecasts show that a hazard is likely to occur in the future – and the actual impact of the forecast hazard on lives and livelihoods. The objective is to protect the most vulnerable people and their livelihoods from the expected impacts of the hazard.

This report features recommendations for anticipatory actions and emergency response actions, tailored to the flagged risks. Anticipatory action recommendations are only included if the risk analysis indicates a hazard/shock that has yet to materialize in the near future. When a hazard/shock has already affected agricultural livelihoods and food security, the window of opportunity for anticipatory action is usually considered closed, even if the impacts of the hazard/shock are expected to continue in the present and the future. In such cases, only emergency response recommendations are made in this report.

Recognizing the role that anticipatory action can play in protracted crises, anticipatory action recommendations are included in such contexts, when appropriate, if the aim of the actions is to mitigate the impact of a new hazard or shock, rather than addressing pre-existing humanitarian needs and underlying vulnerabilities.

Considering the long outlook period of over six months featured in this report, the anticipatory actions listed are indicative and would only be suggested for implementation if a trigger is reached or clear early warning signs manifest. Some recommendations also refer to preparedness activities, which are always critical for the effective and timely implementation of anticipatory actions.

The selection of hunger hotspots is based on consensus among food security experts and conflict, economic and natural hazards analysts from FAO and WFP, both Rome and field based. The process is informed by an initial prioritization, using a set of quantitative and qualitative indicators that include:

- latest absolute figures (projections, where available) of people in Crisis or worse (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification [IPC]/Cadre Harmonisé [CH] Phase 3 and above) and the prevalence of levels of acute food insecurity among the population analysed, as well as the year-on-year trend of both absolute figures and prevalence;
- forward-looking risk analysis of key drivers of acute food insecurity, namely conflict and political violence, economic shocks and natural hazards;
- ongoing or planned agricultural activities for the outlook period, and existing or likely disruptions caused by the above-mentioned contextual risks; and
- aggravating factors, such as humanitarian access constraints, levels of acute malnutrition, lack of national coping capacity, displacement, and the incidence of animal and plant pests and diseases.

The report prioritizes the use of IPC and CH as data sources on Crisis or worse levels of acute food insecurity (IPC/CH Phase 3 and above). When recent IPC/CH data are not available, alternative sources have been considered, such as the WFP Consolidated Approach for Reporting Indicators of Food Security (CARI), including its application to remotely collected data (rCARI), Humanitarian Needs Overviews (HNO) and Humanitarian Response Plans (HRP), or the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET).

The acute food insecurity figures presented in this report for Ethiopia, the Syrian Arab Republic and Palestine are extracted from HNO/HRP estimates of people in need of food and livelihood assistance. These are based on WFP's CARI methodology for

the Syrian Arab Republic. In Palestine, the number of acutely food-insecure people is based on a multisectoral needs assessment informed by the Joint Intersectoral Analysis Framework (JIAF) methodology. For Ethiopia, acute food insecurity figures are based on a combination of WFP CARI, Household Economy Analysis (HEA), Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) and Village Assessment Survey (VAS). For Zimbabwe, the figures are based on FEWS NET's projected population in need of urgent food assistance in February 2024. For all the other countries where data are available, acute food insecurity figures are based on IPC/CH.

FEWS NET and IPC use the same scale, although FEWS NET figures may differ as it uses a different approach. Populations that are classified as "moderately acute food insecure" and "severely acute food insecure", as per WFP's CARI methodology, are reported as an approximation to populations facing Crisis or worse (IPC/CH Phase 3 and above). No data are reported for El Salvador and Nicaragua.

The cutoff date for the analysis and information contained in this report was 17 October 2023.

This report is part of a series of analytical products produced under the Global Network Against Food Crises (GNAFC) initiative, to enhance and coordinate the generation and sharing of evidence-based information and analysis for preventing and addressing food crises. In September 2023, the GNAFC, in collaboration with the Food Security Information Network, released the Global Report on Food Crises 2023 Mid-Year Update, which reports the number of people estimated to be in Crisis or worse (IPC/CH Phase 3 and above) and the prevalence of these numbers within the population analysed in 48 countries/territories with food crisis situations that were available by early August 2023. The report is available at https://fightfoodcrises.net and https://fsinplatform.org.

IPC/CH acute food insecurity phase description and response objectives

PHASE	TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION	PRIORITY RESPONSE OBJECTIVE
1 None/Minimal	Households are able to meet essential food and non-food needs without engaging in atypical and unsustainable strategies to access food and income.	Resilience building and disaster risk reduction.
2 Stressed	Households have minimally adequate food consumption but are unable to afford some essential non-food expenditures without engaging in stress-coping strategies.	Disaster risk reduction and protection of livelihoods.
3 Crisis	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.	**URGENT ACTION REQUIRED** to protect livelihoods and reduce food consumption gaps.
4 Emergency	Some 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.	**URGENT ACTION REQUIRED** to save lives and livelihoods.
5 Catastrophe/ Famine*	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).	**URGENT ACTION REQUIRED** to revert/prevent widespread death and total collapse of livelihoods.

* Some households can be in Catastrophe (IPC/CH Phase 5) even if areas are not classified as Famine (IPC/CH Phase 5). Given the severity and implications of classifying Famine, specific IPC protocols have been developed, and special considerations are identified in the IPC Technical Manual 3.1 (see pp. 24–25 for more details on criteria: https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipc/technical/manual_en).
The classification of areas in Famine Likely is permitted when all IPC protocols for Famine classification are met, except for the existence of reliable evidence for all three outcomes – food consumption or livelihood change, global acute malnutrition (GAM), and crude death rate. Areas can be classified as Famine Likely if minimally adequate evidence available indicates that a Famine may be occurring or will occur. Famine and Famine Likely are equally severe, the only difference is the amount of reliable evidence available to support the statement.

Upcoming trends of acute food insecurity drivers

To identify hunger hotspots, FAO and WFP have assessed how key drivers of acute food insecurity are likely to evolve and their potential combined effects across countries/territories in the coming months; the related risks of deterioration were also gauged. Below is an overview of key findings.

Organized violence and conflict risks

Organized violence and armed conflict continue to constitute significant drivers of acute food insecurity in the following hunger hotspots: **Chad, Burkina Faso and Mali, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Haiti, the Niger, Palestine, Somalia, South Sudan, the Sudan and Yemen.**

Global levels of violent incidents remained at high levels between June and September 2023, continuing the troubling trend between July 2022 and May 2023 when violence increased by 27 percent.[1, 2] The ongoing conflict in Palestine and Israel represents the most severe escalation of violence in the region for years. The situation is evolving rapidly at the time of writing and merits close monitoring and action, amid reports of rapidly rising deaths and displacements. A further sharp rise in casualties and displacement is expected. Broader regional ramifications, such as displacement into neighbouring countries, cannot be excluded. Any broader regional impact could further exacerbate emergency food security needs. Instability and conflict also continues to surge in the Sahel region, stretching from recent military coups in Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger, surging non-state armed group (NSAG) violence to the relentless fighting in the Sudan with its impact on neighbouring countries, especially Chad. Between July and September 2023, the region accounted for 22 percent of all global fatalities related to conflict, up from 12 percent over the previous six months.[3] The requested withdrawal or ongoing drawdown of international peacekeeping missions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali and Somalia are a further element of concern, due to the likely significant knock-on effects. These withdrawals could create security vacuums, permitting increased NSAG activities and attacks against civilians, and potentially hampering humanitarian operations. Armed violence continues to contribute to the upward trajectory in global displacements. After the largest ever recorded increase in 2022, the upward trajectory in global forced displacement showed no sign of slowing in 2023. The eruption of conflict in the Sudan triggered new outflows. Forced displacements totalled an estimated 110 million globally as of May 2023.[4] As highlighted in the last edition of this report, the trend of increased civilian targeting and the growing number of actors in conflicts using such tactics is set to continue throughout 2023, including in several hunger hotspots. The economic impacts of conflict and insecurity are likely to restrict access to, and availability of, food – notably through market disruptions and the reduction or abandonment of cultivated areas, contributing to deepening protracted food crises.

Natural hazard risks

By September 2023, the El Niño event which started in June 2023 had reached its peak of activity, with the most recent forecasts (issued in September 2023), from international climate centres – including the International Research Institute (IRI), Climate Prediction Center/National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (CPC/NOAA) and the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF) – suggesting a very high likelihood for El Niño conditions persisting over the forecast period. This climatic shift has already had a negative impact on various regions, notably Southeast Asia and Latin America, and is anticipated to persist in the upcoming six months, notably affecting regions in East Africa, Southern Africa and Latin America.

The **Dry Corridor of Central America**, which stretches across Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Honduras, has been affected by El Niño-induced drought conditions during the prior *Primera* season (May–August), and it is highly likely that these below-average conditions will continue, particularly in large parts of Nicaragua, while Honduras and Guatemala might encounter mixed or slightly below-average rainfall conditions through the *Postrera* (September–December) and *Apante* (December–February) or *Postrera Tardía* seasons. This poses significant challenges to agriculture, especially for bean crops that are mostly grown during these periods, and amplifies food insecurity in this already vulnerable region.

In **Timor-Leste**, as well as parts of **Southeast Asia**, El Niño-induced droughts are expected to persist in the coming months and are likely to be exacerbated by the ongoing positive Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD),[5] impacting agricultural production and affecting the food security of vulnerable populations in rural and urban areas.

In **East Africa**, forecasts suggest a very high likelihood of above-average October–December rains, which are typically associated with El Niño and exacerbated by the ongoing positive IOD. Above-average rainfall would contribute to above-average cereal production, despite likely substantial but localized flood-related losses. Abundant October–December rains will also boost recovery from an exceptionally prolonged, widespread and intense drought between 2020 and early 2023 in pastoral areas of southern Ethiopia, most of Somalia, and northern and eastern Kenya. However, livestock losses can be expected in flood-affected areas due to drownings and rising levels of livestock diseases, while a full recovery from the massive livelihood losses caused by the drought will necessitate several solid rainy seasons. The high risk of flooding across the Horn of Africa also increases the likelihood of further population displacement, temporary market disruption, localized increases in food insecurity, a further outbreak of diseases (including cholera) and related surges in acute malnutrition.

In **Southern Africa**, the most recent forecasts indicate a higher likelihood of below-average rainfall across large sections of the subregion between October 2023 and January 2024,[6] driven

by El Niño. These areas include southern and central parts of Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia, and most of Zimbabwe, as well as Eswatini and Lesotho. If this rainfall outlook materializes, agricultural production would be negatively impacted, raising the risk of increases in food insecurity over the longer term. Furthermore, the cyclone season in the southwest Indian basin starts in October 2023 and extends through May 2024. Early forecasts for the season suggest relatively below-average activity in the Channel of Mozambique, reducing the risk of cyclone strikes for Madagascar and Mozambique. However, vigilant monitoring of these areas is crucial, particularly between January and March, which aligns with the peak of cyclone activity in this basin.

Other countries discussed in the report, including Somalia, Yemen, Myanmar and Bangladesh, also need continuous monitoring through December 2023, with the peak of cyclone activity anticipated around November.

Economic risks

The global economy has slowed in 2023 and growth is expected to remain low in 2024. This is due to the ongoing tightening of monetary policy, which has made credit more expensive and thereby slowed economic activity, and to persistently elevated prices for several key commodities. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) July 2023 forecast predicted low global economic growth of 3 percent in 2023 and 2024. Relatively stagnant growth is also estimated for low- and middle-income countries in 2023 and 2024.[7]

In September 2023, the FAO Food Price Index was almost unchanged from its value in August and fell 24 percent from its peak in March 2022, but remained 20 percent above its December 2019 level, before the current episode of elevated prices.[8] While wheat prices continued to drop compared to their level in the same period in 2022, rice prices remained almost 28 percent above its year earlier value due to export restrictions and extreme weather events in key producing countries.[9] Although efforts are ongoing to facilitate Ukrainian exports via Black Sea, with the expiration of the Black Sea Grain Initiative in July 2023, export volumes are limited, with possible longer-term implications for local production. While as of early October 2023 global markets for food commodities exported by Ukraine were well supplied, the absence of reliable marine shipping routes from Ukraine could impact availability in global food markets in case of unforeseen shocks and therefore contribute to price volatility. Several factors could put upward pressure on food prices in the coming months. Prices for crude oil – a key input in the food value chain – are again on an upward trajectory, with the price of a barrel of Brent crude above USD 90 in late September 2023, from just over USD 70 in March 2023.[10] In addition, current El Niño conditions are expected to negatively affect agricultural production, which could lead to an increase in global food prices.[11] Of even greater concern to poor consumers is that, while global food prices have steadily declined, domestic prices continue to rise sharply in many countries owing to weak currencies, delays in price transmission and supply chain bottlenecks. In October 2023, 54 countries recorded annual food inflation of more than 10 percent.

Many low- and middle-income countries continue coping with severe macroeconomic crises caused by several drivers. Although global financial conditions have generally eased since early 2023, borrowing costs for low- and middle-income countries remain historically high, increasing the risk of debt default and restricting access to short-term borrowing.[12] The extremely high cost of servicing debt absorbs budgetary resources for social protection and investments in strengthening resilience. Several countries have requested bailouts by the IMF, which usually require implementation of austerity measures including reforming subsidies for essential goods, often further weakening household purchasing power.[13] High international commodity prices combined with weak currencies, make imports expensive and worsen the trade balance of net importers. Reflecting market conditions in the first half of 2023, net-food-importing developing countries are expected to spend almost 40 percent more on their food imports in 2023 than in 2019 (before the COVID-19 pandemic).[14, 15] In addition, depleted foreign-exchange reserves are making it difficult to import essential goods such as food and fuel.[16]

Slow global growth, volatile international commodity prices and high debt costs are likely to continue through 2024, further worsening the situation in many crisis countries. As there are several factors that keep domestic inflation high and governments are forced to consider cutting subsidies on essential goods, poor households are likely to continue struggling to purchase basic foods. In addition, those households that are failing to access food are likely to not receive adequate assistance since humanitarian organizations face funding shortfalls and governments face tight budgets.

Regional ramifications of the crisis in the Sudan – update

As anticipated in the previous edition of this report, the conflict in the Sudan, which started in April 2023, continues to severely impact its neighbouring countries.[17] The magnitude and pace of displacement persist at an alarming level, with almost 5.6 million people displaced by mid-September 2023.[18] **This includes 1.2 million people who have crossed the border into neighbouring countries, representing a sixfold increase in cross-border movements, up from 220 000 people in May 2023**.[19] As per the August revision of the United Nations Refugee Agency's (UNHCR) projections, the total number of refugees and returnees is estimated to reach 1.8 million by the end of 2023, if the conflict continues.[20]

People crossing borders often arrive in remote areas where dire conditions prevail and humanitarian assistance is constrained.[21, 22] In addition, host communities are often already affected by high levels of acute food insecurity, increasing competition over scarce resources and fuelling tensions between displaced populations and host communities.[23] Chad has received the largest number of people, followed by Egypt, South Sudan, Ethiopia and the Central African Republic.

Violence in the Greater Darfur region forced more than 423 000 people over the border with **Chad**, mostly into the Ouaddaï, Wadi Fira and Sila regions.[24] This has already resulted in a surge in acute food insecurity among the host population between June and August 2023, while nearly 30 percent of children under 5 years of age were estimated to be acutely malnourished in September 2023.[25] Arrivals are expected to reach 600 000 by the end of 2023, and are likely to continue into 2024,[26, 27] exacerbating pressure on food stocks and livelihoods.[28]

Over 317 000 people have fled to **Egypt**, projected to reach 350 000 by the end of the year.[29] A tightening of Egypt's entry regulations in June 2023, requiring all Sudanese nationals to obtain a visa upon arrival at the border, reverses a longstanding exemption granted to children, women and elderly men.[30] This has led to a drop in cross-border movements and further increases in waiting times in dire conditions, without access to food, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services, or proper shelter, including shade.[31]

Arrivals in **South Sudan**, reaching almost 300 000 people as of September 2023, are predominantly returnees,[32] mostly entering through the Renk border into Upper Nile State.[33] Around 590 000 arrivals are expected by the end of the year.[34] While levels of acute food insecurity among returnees is of concern,[35] conditions for host communities were already poor due to crop production deficits, high food prices and limited income-earning opportunities due to years of conflict and floods. According to FEWS NET, most parts of Upper Nile are likely to face Emergency levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 4) between August and September 2023.[36]

Despite overall lower numbers, cross-border movements have also continued to the **Central African Republic** and **Ethiopia**.[37] As of September 2023, over 20 000 people had arrived in the Central African Republic from the Sudan, including 15 000 Sudanese refugees and almost 5 000 Central African refugee returnees. The end of the rainy season and a potential escalation of clashes in South Darfur could lead to a new surge in cross-border movements; the number of arrivals is already projected to reach 25 000 people by the end of the year. Ethiopia is currently hosting around 38 000 refugees and returnees, mostly in the Amhara region, amid a surge in violence in August 2023. UNHCR is projecting the number of arrivals in Ethiopia to reach 192 000 people by the end of 2023.[38]

While the conflict in the Sudan has resulted in the destruction of critical economic infrastructure in the country, it has also disrupted supply routes for neighbouring countries – making humanitarian access more challenging – in a region characterized by intense competition for tradeable cereals. Since South Sudan heavily depends on oil exports, any escalation of conflict in Port Sudan could have dire consequences for the country's economy.[39] In South Sudan, the ongoing disruption of cross-border trade is expected to continue, resulting in high food prices in border areas, where food baskets have seen price increases ranging from 25 percent to 138 percent.[40]

Number of people in acute food insecurity in hunger hotspots

in 2023–2024 (where available,[1] most recent data), in millions

Source of data: FAO and WFP. 2023. *Hunger Hotspots analysis (November 2023 to April 2024)*. Rome. https://doi.org/10.4060/cc8419en.

[1] FEWS NET projects that in Zimbabwe 3–3.49 million people will be acutely food insecure and in need of urgent assistance by February 2024.
[2] For the outlook period, the IPC projection is currently being reviewed based on recent developments related to the conflict and the performance of the agricultural season.
[3] HRP 2023 (February 2023). Data is from 2022. Refers to the number of People in Need of food security and livelihood assistance. Most current data is non-peak. Peak numbers are presented in the graph on page 12.
[4] Most current data reported is non-peak. Peak numbers are presented in the graph on page 12. Data is from 2022.There has not been yet a new nationwide IPC analysis released in 2023. [5] Most current data reported is non-peak. Peak numbers are presented in the graph on page 12.
[6] Based on WFP CARI. Data is from 2022. Refers to the number of People in Need of food security and livelihood assistance.
[7] Less than 50 percent of the population covered by IPC/CH.
[8] HNO 2023. Data is from 2022. Refers to the number of People in Need of food security and livelihood assistance.
[9] Populations that are classified as 'moderately acute food insecure' and 'severely acute food insecure' as per WFP's CARI methodology are reported as an approximation to populations facing Crisis or worse (IPC/CH Phase 3 and above). The acute food insecurity figures presented in this report for Ethiopia, the Syrian Arab Republic and Palestine are extracted from HNO/HRP estimates of people in need of food and livelihood assistance.
[10] Prevalence of the population analysed expressed in percentage terms.

The IPC technical manual provides guidance on where each indicator sits within the IPC analytical framework. For details see: https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipc/technical/manual_en.

Reduction of humanitarian assistance

After two consecutive years of a record surge of global humanitarian needs and subsequent scale-up in humanitarian assistance in 2021 and 2022, global economic headwinds and long-term fiscal tightening mean that funding levels have been reduced in 2023. However, humanitarian needs, including acute food insecurity, remain high due to the lingering impact of the global pandemic, compounded by new local and protracted conflicts, increasing frequency and severity of climate shocks, a very high debt burden, and trade-restrictive measures contributing to elevated prices, and the ripple effects of the war in Ukraine on global supply chains.

As of 30 September 2023, 32 percent of the total Global Humanitarian Overview was funded – notably less than one year ago – while the gap between financial requirements and pledged resources stood at USD 37 billion.[41] This gap is the largest recorded since at least 2012. While funding requirements for humanitarian assistance have significantly increased since then and reached their highest level in 2023, funding levels will most likely face a decrease year-on-year in 2023 for the first time in the past ten years.[42] These funding shortfalls are also affecting humanitarian emergency agriculture, food and livelihood assistance.

Urgent food and livelihood assistance is required for all households facing Crisis or worse levels of acute food insecurity (IPC/CH Phase 3 and above). Decision-makers should not wait for Famine declarations before scaling up assistance in areas classified in Crisis or Emergency (IPC/CH Phases 3 or 4), particularly if for a sustained period, already have higher-than-average levels of excess mortality and morbidity. Early investment and action not only saves lives – it saves financial resources, as anticipatory action has been shown to be more cost-effective. Early action to prevent famine is required, to prevent loss of lives and a full collapse of livelihoods and social networks with deleterious impacts on the lives of an unborn generation.[43]

Highest concern: Hotspots with catastrophic conditions

This category includes:

- countries or territories with Famine or Risk of Famine;
- countries or territories with populations already in Catastrophe (IPC/CH Phase 5); and
- countries or territories at risk of deterioration towards catastrophic conditions, i.e. where an extremely vulnerable population in Emergency (IPC/CH Phase 4) is facing severe aggravating factors – especially access constraints – which indicate the possibility of a further deterioration and possible occurrence of catastrophic conditions in the outlook period.

Burkina Faso and Mali, South Sudan and the Sudan remain hotspots of highest concern for the November 2023 to April 2024 outlook. Palestine was added to the list of hotspots of highest concern due to the escalation of conflict in October 2023. These hotspots have segments of populations identified or projected to experience starvation or death (Catastrophe/Famine, IPC/CH Phase 5) or at risk of deterioration towards catastrophic conditions. They require the most urgent attention.

In **Mali** and **Burkina Faso**, already high levels of acute food insecurity might further increase in both countries in the outlook period, driven primarily by escalating levels of violence, aggravating very high access constraints.[44] Of key concern are the 45 200 people who were estimated to face death and starvation (CH Phase 5) by August 2023 in conflict-affected Boucle du Mouhoun and Sahel regions in Burkina Faso and in Ménaka region in Mali. These were the highest figures of populations projected to be in catastrophic conditions in Burkina Faso (42 694) and the first time Mali had estimated population in these conditions (2 507 people).[45] A further increase in violence affecting civilians is expected in Mali, a trend likely to be reinforced by the withdrawal of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) by the end of 2023. In Burkina Faso, the epicentre of violence across the region, the expanding presence of NSAGs in the west and south of the country, and a further encircling of the capital, are likely to drive increased levels of casualties and displacement.

About 1.5 million people were acutely food insecure in **Palestine** in 2022, including 1.2 million people in the Gaza Strip (more than half of the population). Deteriorating security and economic conditions most likely resulted in a worsening of the food security situation even before the escalation of conflict at the beginning of October 2023.[46] The ongoing hostilities have already resulted in soaring numbers of casualties and rapid displacement as well as the destruction of critical infrastructure, amid a complete blockade of the Gaza Strip at the time of writing.[47] The conflict is highly likely to lead to a staggering increase in the magnitude and severity of acute food insecurity in Gaza.

In **South Sudan**, critical levels of food insecurity are expected to persist across the country, even after the start of harvests in October due to insufficient crop production, high staple food prices and a lack of resources to support the rising numbers of returnees from the Sudan.[48] The border area of northern Jonglei and southern Upper Nile states is of key concern, as conflict dynamics remain unstable amid returnee influx and competition over scarce resources.[49] Between April and July 2023, 43 000 people were projected to face Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) levels of acute food insecurity: 36 000 people in Jonglei State and 7 000 people in Unity State.[50]

In **the Sudan**, the devastating impacts of the conflict on livelihoods, the agriculture sector and the economy at large, amid the internal displacement of 4.4 million people between April and October 2023,[51] will drive high levels of acute food insecurity. By September 2023, around 20.3 million people were assessed to face Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 and above) levels of acute food insecurity, including more than 6.3 million people in Emergency (IPC Phase 4).[52] This is a staggering deterioration compared with the same period last year, and the expected severe impact on agricultural production is expected to significantly dampen the traditional seasonal improvement in the coming months.

Very high concern: Hotspots with deteriorating critical conditions

Several other hunger hotspots need urgent action to avert extreme hunger or death. These are countries/territories with sizeable populations – over 500 000 people – estimated or projected to be facing Emergency levels of acute food insecurity (IPC/CH Phase 4) or identified as severely acute food insecure as per WFP's CARI methodology; or countries with more than 10 percent of the population analysed in Emergency (IPC/CH Phase 4) or severely acute food insecure, when at least 50 percent of the population was analysed. In the included countries or territories, life-threatening conditions are expected to further intensify in the outlook period.

Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Haiti, Pakistan, Somalia, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen are hotspots of very high concern.

In **Afghanistan**, 2.8 million people were estimated to face Emergency (IPC Phase 4) levels of acute food insecurity between May and October 2023.[53] In Nuristan and Ghor, over 20 percent of the population was facing critical levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 4). Cuts in humanitarian assistance and the protracted economic crisis could result in a worsening of acute food insecurity over the forecast period, compounded by the seasonal deterioration during the harsh winter months.

In the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, 2.9 million people were assessed to face Emergency levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 4) between January and June 2024.[54] Conflict will continue to underpin elevated levels of acute food insecurity in the eastern Ituri and North Kivu provinces.

The harvest season between August and December 2023 is likely to provide only limited relief to the 20.1 million people in **Ethiopia** that were estimated to be acutely food insecure and in need of urgent assistance, according to the HRP in the first half of 2023. The situation is compounded by a four-month pause in humanitarian food assistance through international pipelines.[55] Acute food insecurity is expected to again deteriorate with the lean season beginning in early 2024, with the highest concerns for most of Tigray region and the pastoral south and southeast of the country.[56]

In **Haiti**, a deteriorating security situation, the protracted economic crisis, low agricultural production and the potential impact of hurricanes are likely to drive already critical levels of acute food insecurity. Around 1.4 million people are estimated to be in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) between March and June 2024 (14 percent of the population analysed), with a peak of 30 percent in one area of Grand'Anse department.[57]

In **Pakistan**, 2.2 million people are projected to face Emergency levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 4) between November 2023 and January 2024, including two areas in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa where 20 percent of the population is projected to face critical levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 4).[58] This is largely driven by harsh weather and the ongoing deterioration of the national economic crisis, which could further exacerbate the already elevated inflation for essential food and non-food items.

In the **Syrian Arab Republic**, 12.1 million people were assessed to be acutely food insecure between August and October 2022, including 2.6 million severely acute food insecure, based on WFP's CARI methodology.[59] Deteriorating economic conditions, compounded by cuts to humanitarian assistance, are likely to increase acute food insecurity further over the forecast period.

Between October and December 2023, 1 million people were projected to face Emergency levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 4) in **Somalia**.[60] While no people in Catastrophe conditions (IPC Phase 5) are projected – the first time since May 2022 – the prevalence of critically acutely food-insecure people remains of very high concern (10 percent and above) especially in central and southern areas of the country, including Bay, Hiiraan, Lower and Middle Juba, and Lower Shabelle regions.

In **Yemen**, acute food insecurity is expected to remain at critical levels, amid the protracted economic crisis worsened by an anticipated reduction in humanitarian assistance. While a new countrywide IPC analysis is being finalized, according to a partial analysis covering areas under Government of Yemen (GoY) control, about 1.1 million people (20 percent of the population analysed) are estimated to be in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) between June and December 2023. In several areas, 20 percent of the populations is projected to be critically food insecure.[61]

Other countries or situations that require monitoring

Several other countries or situations, while not identified as hunger hotspots in this report, merit close monitoring. These include: i) countries or situations where data was insufficient or not available to allow for a comparative assessment based on the applied methodology, but which were flagged as concerning during the discussions on the basis of other evidence, as described below; and ii) countries or situations in protracted crisis with high numbers of people in acute food insecurity, but without clear evidence for a likely food security deterioration of a level comparable with trends observed in countries selected as hunger hotspots. Such situations of concern include, but are not limited to, the following countries:

In **Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh**, between May and September 2023, over 620 000 Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals (FDMNs), which represent 65 percent of the total FDMN population, were projected to face Crisis or worse levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 and above); this includes 25 percent of FDMNs in Cox's Bazar in Emergency (IPC Phase 4).[62] Acute food insecurity among the host community is also a growing concern with approximately 144 000 people in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 and above), including 18 000 people in Emergency (IPC Phase 4). The lingering impact of widespread flooding and prolonged exposure to high food prices[63] has been compounded by a series of ration cuts in 2023, which resulted in decreased food consumption[64] and acute malnutrition,[65] exacerbating the existing vulnerabilities of FDMNs who are fully dependent on humanitarian assistance to meet their basic needs.

Acute food security in **Myanmar** remains of concern due to likely below-average cereal production in 2023, following a reduced 2022 cereal output which contributed to record high food prices.[66] Intensified conflict is likely to persist and drive displacement, amounting to 1.95 million internally displaced people (IDP) as of September 2023.[67] The situation has been compounded by the lingering, devastating effects of Cyclone Mocha in Rakhine State and other states and regions in western Myanmar in mid-May 2023. Humanitarian access constraints are increasing in multiple states, limiting in particular access to and availability of health services, and are exacerbating an already critical nutrition situation.[68]

Between May and September 2023, over 260 000 people (20 percent of the population) were projected to face Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 and above) conditions in **Timor-Leste**. While a new IPC analysis is being finalized, acute food insecurity remains a concern. Below-average precipitation and above-average temperatures, typically associated with El Niño, are forecast[69] and are likely to be exacerbated by the ongoing positive IOD.[70] Lack of precipitation could affect the 2024 main crops season, leading to a decline in agricultural output and a corresponding increase in the import requirement. In line with recent surges in regional and global rice prices, and considering a likely decline in national production, domestic food prices are expected to increase significantly.

Acute food insecurity in **Colombia** remains of concern and contributing factors require close monitoring, including high inflation rates and limited gross domestic product (GDP) growth;[71] persisting below-average rainfall in localized areas associated with El Niño;[72] and internal conflict and violence leading to displacement and disruption of food supplies.[73]

The acute food security situation in **the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** requires continued attention. Available evidence points to a challenging socioeconomic situation driven by high prices and a contraction in domestic demand.[74, 75, 76] In September 2023, headline inflation reached 318 percent,[77] and it is expected to remain at about 250 percent by the end of 2023, mainly due to increasing money supply and currency devaluation, constraining purchasing power.[78, 79, 80] Finally, the effects of El Niño, with below-average rainfall forecast for the outlook, are likely to have a negative impact on food production.[81]

The acute food security situation in **Lebanon** remains of concern. Between May and October 2023, 1.4 million Lebanese residents, Syrian refugees, Palestine refugees in Lebanon, and Palestine refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic (corresponding to 25 percent of the population analysed) were estimated to face Crisis or worse acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 and above).[82] This included 112 000 people in Emergency (IPC Phase 4). Any spill-over of the conflict in Palestine and Israel, which severely escalated in early October 2023, could further exacerbate the food security situation in Lebanon.[83] A wider involvement in the conflict could exacerbate the ongoing economic deterioration and the multifaceted crisis the country has been facing, potentially resulting in an increase in the number of acutely food insecure people over the outlook period.

In **Nigeria**, over 24.8 million people (13 percent of the population analysed) were projected to be acutely food insecure and in need of urgent assistance (CH Phase 3 and above) between June and August 2023,[84] and 5.9 million children under 5 years of age faced acute malnutrition between May 2022 and April 2023 in the northeast and northwest regions.[85] Conflict is expected to continue to drive displacement and disrupt livelihoods, while humanitarian access constraints remain extremely high.[86] Continuous macroeconomic challenges, including high inflation,[87] will likely hinder food access, while below-average rainfall forecast until the end of October in the northeast region, and a risk of flooding in the same period in southern and western areas, may further exacerbate food insecurity.[88, 89]

In Karamoja, **Uganda**, 342 000 people are projected to face Crisis or worse acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 and above) from September 2023 to February 2024, an 11 percent increase compared with 2022.[90, 91] Drivers include constrained crop production due to unfavourable weather, pests and diseases, high food prices, and insecurity.[92] After the release of the IPC in June, the harvest has been forecast to be below average, likely leading to a harsh 2024 lean season.[93, 94, 95] October to December flood risks are elevated given the forecast of above-average rains.[96]

Acute food insecurity trends in hunger hotspots of highest and very high concern

2020–2024[1] peak numbers and prevalence

Source of data: FAO and WFP. 2023. *Hunger Hotspots analysis (November 2023 to April 2024)*. Rome. https://doi.org/10.4060/cc8419en.

[1] Data for 2023 and 2024 is considered as expected peak based on information available as of September 2023. For Ethiopia, Palestine, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen, no nationwide peak data is available for 2023 or 2024.

[2] Prevalence of the population analysed expressed in percentage terms.

[3] Based on Flowminder population data, 2022 and 2023 peaks are based on the same projection (November 2022–March 2023).

[4] The number for 2022 is from HRP report, while previous numbers are from IPC analyses. The 2021 IPC peak number reflects the merger of the October 2020 and May 2021 IPC analysis results. The Government of Ethiopia has not endorsed the May 2021 IPC analysis.

[5] Geographical coverage varies significantly over time: 2020: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (2 percent of the country population analysed); 2021 and 2022: Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh (9 percent); 2023: Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh (16 percent).

[6] For 2021, the methodology followed WFP's CARI approach, while the 2022 numbers are based on the multisectoral needs assessment which uses different indicators including the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) with a 30-day recall period and the economic capacity to meet essential needs (ECMEN).

[7] Based on WFP CARI.

[8] The 2022 peak number pertains to IPC analysis released in March 2022. There has not been yet a new nationwide IPC analysis released in 2023.

Comparison over time indicates a general trend however comparability issues exist in terms of:

(i) Haiti: larger coverage of urban areas in 2020; the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia and Pakistan: increase geographical and population coverage, respectively from 65 to 94 percent of the population analysed between 2020 and 2023, from 46 to 100 percent between 2020 and 2022, and from 2 to 16 percent in 2023; Somalia, the Sudan and Yemen: increase in country total population estimates between 2020 and 2022–2023.

(ii) Analysis time periods for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Haiti, Pakistan, Somalia, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen.

Caution in reading and using this analysis should be observed. Trends of prevalence and total numbers can diverge due to changes in population covered. Populations that are classified as "moderately acute food insecure" and "severely acute food insecure", as per WFP's CARI methodology, are reported as an approximation to populations facing Crisis or worse (IPC/CH Phase 3 and above).

Country risk narratives

Asia and the Pacific

Afghanistan

Key drivers of food insecurity: protracted economic crisis

Acute food insecurity is likely to worsen over the forecast period due to the likely drop in humanitarian funding and its destabilizing impact on the fragile macroeconomic situation.

In 2023, cereal production recovered slightly compared with the previous year.[97] Staple food prices continued to decline in the months leading to July 2023, reflecting a downward trend of international prices, coupled with the completion of the 2023 harvest. While this indicates a relative stabilization of the economy, nearly two-thirds of households struggle to maintain livelihoods that can support healthy food consumption, and the inability of many households to afford food likely contributes to decreasing prices.[98] The situation is compounded by severe cuts in humanitarian food assistance. In 2023, a staggering 10 million people have been cut off from life-saving assistance, due to a massive funding shortfall.[99] Since assistance accounts for a large share of foreign currency inflows, a drop could destabilize the economy and lead to sharp currency depreciation, further eroding livelihoods. This would further compound the income losses of some farmers due to the ban on the cultivation of poppy.[100, 101] Moreover, even as higher precipitation in parts of the country due to the ongoing El Niño will benefit the 2024 harvest, it could lead to flooding and localized destruction of agricultural assets. More than 106 000 people require food security and agriculture assistance following the earthquakes in October 2023, which have reduced families' ability to access food and adversely impacted their livelihoods.[102]

As a result, acute food insecurity could deteriorate over the forecast period, which also coincides with the winter and lean season – typically the peak in acute food insecurity. This could reverse an improvement between May and October 2023 compared with the same period in 2022, when 18.9 million people (45 percent of the population) were in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 and above) including 6 million people in Emergency (IPC Phase 4). The improvement stemmed among other factors from the effect of the scale-up of humanitarian assistance in 2022.[103] Between May and October 2023, the number of people in Crisis or worse levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 and above) was projected at 15.3 million (35 percent of the population), including 2.8 million people in Emergency (IPC Phase 4). A new IPC analysis is expected to be released soon.

Acute malnutrition remains of concern, with more than 4 million children and women in need of assistance in 2023.[104, 105] The ban on Afghan female aid workers will continue to critically impact the effectiveness of the humanitarian response and the provision of maternal and child health care.[106]

RECOMMENDATIONS

Anticipatory actions

- Prepare for the potential effects of El Niño by monitoring weather patterns and reviewing early warning systems, winter prepositioning and flood preparedness plans. Support the cultivation of winter wheat and barley crops, as well as planting of spring crops (including wheat), through input prepositioning and distribution, while supporting the establishment of green corridors between rural and urban centres to encourage safe spaces to sell produce.
- Provide livestock health kits (minerals, salt licks) and fodder to at-risk families over the winter period to keep stock healthy and fit, particularly for families where livestock have been impacted by the three-year drought.
- Implement cash-for-work programmes aimed at restoring irrigation systems (clearing irrigation channels and rivers, and constructing flood control structures), ahead of the spring season.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Emergency response

The 2023 Revised Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) assessed 19.1 million people in need of food security and agriculture-related assistance requiring USD 1.57 billion; 7.2 million people require nutrition interventions with a funding requirement of USD 364.5 million.[107]

- Sustain livelihoods and life-saving food and nutrition assistance to meet existing needs.
- Support vulnerable households to secure alternative livelihood options, such as production of vegetable crops, to ensure access to food and income.
- Maintain prevention and treatment of acute malnutrition activities integrated with the food security, health and WASH package of services.
- Continue emergency school-based feeding programmes while strengthening asset creation and livelihoods schemes through smallholder agriculture market support.

RECOMMENDATIONS
Other actions

- Increase advocacy for sufficient humanitarian funding to avoid catastrophic food insecurity and malnutrition consequences.
- Sustain monitoring the fragile economic situation with a particular interest on food prices, markets and currency fluctuation, considering the compound impacts of the projected decrease in international support.
- Enhance data management and analysis to support early warning mechanisms and targeting approaches to efficiently utilize limited resources in a context of widespread needs.

Pakistan

Key drivers of food insecurity: economic deterioration

Acute food insecurity is likely to deteriorate over the coming months due to a deepening economic crisis and upcoming lean season, and political uncertainty ahead of elections.

Political uncertainties and the aftermath of the 2022 monsoon floods have increased economic stress indicated by significant inflation, currency depreciation and low foreign-exchange reserves.[108] In August 2023, yearly food inflation stood at 38.5 percent in urban areas and 40.6 percent in rural areas.[109] While a USD 3 billion credit line from IMF in July 2023 helped to prevent an economic collapse, austerity measures under the agreement will likely reduce household purchasing power in the coming months.[110] A cut in subsidies for essential energy commodities in mid-2023, which helped to secure the IMF agreement, has already contributed to increasing fuel prices.

Militant attacks in provinces bordering Afghanistan continued to increase from May 2023,[111] adding to the growing political uncertainty around elections planned for January 2024 which could lead to a surge in civil unrest and deepen the economic crisis.[112, 113, 114]

In an analysis covering 16 percent of the population, an estimated 11.8 million people (31 percent of the population analysed) are projected to face Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 and above) levels of acute food insecurity between November 2023 and January 2024, including 2.2 million people in Emergency (IPC Phase 4).[115] The acute food insecurity situation improved substantially in areas covered by the postflooding analysis between September and December 2022.[116] However, acute food insecurity is projected to worsen compared with April and October 2023, as a result of high food prices, reduced employment opportunities and seasonal factors. If the economic crisis and conflict escalate, acute food insecurity could further deteriorate.

In an analysis covering 32 districts, 2.14 million children are suffering from acute malnutrition between March 2023 and January 2024. During the projected period from October 2023 to January 2024, the Acute Malnutrition Phase classification is expected to deteriorate in four districts compared to the period from March to September 2023. For the remaining 28 districts, it is projected that their phase classifications will remain unchanged. A slight deterioration in acute malnutrition is projected in 17 of the 28 remaining districts, although it does not warrant a change of the current phase.[117]

RECOMMENDATIONS
Anticipatory actions

- Continue to support the upcoming cultivation of the winter cropping season for wheat through input distribution.
- Enhance support to vulnerable families to have access to vegetable seeds for home gardens, alongside gardening kits (tools, fertilizer) to support the generation of healthy and locally grown, accessible food, ahead of the main harvest.
- Maintain the distribution of animal feed and supplements and animal vaccination to vulnerable livestock owners to ensure sustained access to milk and proteins.

RECOMMENDATIONS
Emergency response

The Revised 2022 Floods Response Plan anticipates 20.6 million people in need of assistance, requiring USD 816 million. While around 14.6 million people require agriculture and food security support, 7.1 million people require nutrition support.[118]

- Continue to provide food assistance to people displaced by floods and other vulnerable populations heavily impacted by high food prices and progressively introduce recovery interventions.
- Strengthen the support and ongoing development of existing social protection mechanisms and systems (Benazir Income Support Programme) to better target and transfer cash to vulnerable households – to meet their immediate food and other essential needs.
- Scale up the extension of nutrition services to prevent and treat acute malnutrition among children under 5 years of age and pregnant and lactating women in flood-affected districts, especially those areas with high global acute malnutrition (GAM) prevalence.

RECOMMENDATIONS
Other actions

- Develop in-depth risk analysis and monitoring to inform the nuancing and adaptation of programmes.
- Ensure organizations are prepared to provide direct livelihood and food assistance to emergency-affected populations not reached through government programmes.
- Strengthen collaboration with national and regional governments regarding the food and agriculture value chain.

Latin America and the Caribbean

Central America: El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua

Key drivers of food insecurity: below-average rainfall, high prices and above-average seasonal hurricanes

The impact of below-average rainfall and high input prices in 2023 on agricultural production is likely to affect the livelihoods of smallholder farmers and livestock owners, and impart upward pressure on already high food prices, aggravating acute food insecurity.

Dry and hot weather conditions at the start of the planting period in May 2023 have resulted in a cutback in the area cultivated,[119] and *Primera* season yield declines are expected due to irregular and below-average rains as well as high temperatures.[120] In Guatemala, an estimated 53 000 hectares of maize and bean crops (about 5 percent of the total planted areas) were lost across the country due to adverse weather conditions.[121] Forecast below-average rainfall and warmer-than-average temperatures are expected to prevail in Nicaragua, and parts of Guatemala and Honduras until February 2024,[122] which could affect the 2023/24 *Apante* bean crop as well as the livestock sector by reducing pasture and water availability.[123]

In El Salvador, average precipitation is forecast during the above-mentioned period. That said, the country is the only net bean importer among the four, and it is likely to face high import costs if regional bean production reduces as a result of adverse weather conditions. In addition, the August updated forecast points to an above-normal Atlantic hurricane season,[124] which lasts from June to November, typically coinciding with the rainy season. Although increased rainfall associated with hurricane activities could offset some rainfall deficits currently forecast, it also increases the risk of flooding and wind damage to crops. Should the 2023/24 season result in below-average maize and bean production in the Dry Corridor, this would exacerbate the food insecurity situation of smallholder farmers, whose livelihoods are already strained by previous shocks and high input costs.[125]

Despite overall declines throughout the first half of 2023, food prices remain high, with the annual food inflation rate in the four countries ranging between 5 and 9 percent in August 2023,[126] constraining economic access to food for vulnerable households. If production of staple crops reduces in the Dry Corridor, it is likely that subsistence farmers would exhaust food reserves from their own production earlier than normal and resort to markets, where food prices are already high. For example, prices of beans in August 2023 were well above their year-earlier values, with the year-on-year differences oscillating between 25 percent in El Salvador and Guatemala and 40 percent in Nicaragua and Honduras.[127]

In Guatemala, about 3.1 million people (18 percent of the total population) are projected to face Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 and above) levels of acute food insecurity between September 2023 and February 2024, including 323 000 in Emergency (IPC Phase 4).[128] In Honduras, the number of people facing Crisis or worse acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 and above) was estimated at 2.4 million (25 percent of the population), including 352 000 in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) in the lean season from June to August 2023.[129] While these figures represent a marginal improvement compared with the same period a year ago, the impact of below-average rainfall raises the risk of improvements reversing and acute food insecurity deteriorating in the Dry Corridor of the four countries, where the rural poverty rate is at least 50 percent.[130, 131]

RECOMMENDATIONS
Anticipatory actions

- Provide early warning messages with tailored advice as well as enhancing readiness by strategically positioning supplies to enable quick aid delivery and safeguard productive resources prior to a hurricane's arrival.
- Distribute unconditional cash transfers to protect lives and livelihoods in the face of forecast hazards (hurricane and drought).
- Distribute agricultural and livestock inputs, such as drought-tolerant corn, beans and sorghum seeds and fertilizer or supplementary feeding for cattle to support agricultural activities during the *Primera* and *Postrera* seasons.
- Develop and implement sustainable water management systems, such as water harvesting and storage, to aid farmers in dry periods.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Emergency response

The El Salvador 2023 HRP calls for USD 33.9 million for food security and USD 3.22 million for nutrition interventions.[132] The Guatemala 2023 HRP calls for USD 26 million for food security and USD 16 million for nutrition interventions.[133] The Honduras 2023 HRP calls for USD 132.2 million for food and nutrition security and USD 21.2 million for nutrition interventions.[134]

- Complement government-led support following a shock event, such as hurricane or drought, with the provision of cash, food assistance, livelihood and nutrition-sensitive activities to affected populations.
- Provide emergency veterinary services and livestock feed in regions where dry conditions are affecting pasture and water availability, to prevent further loss.
- Deploy rapid response teams to assess and address acute food insecurity and malnutrition in real time, particularly during extreme weather events or sudden spikes in food prices.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Other actions

- Increase food security and nutrition surveillance and prime intervention strategies for the most food-insecure regions, particularly those impacted by drought conditions in the Dry Corridor.
- Consistently track the pricing of essential commodities like food, fuel and fertilizers. Enhance both market and economic oversight to facilitate necessary modifications to cash-based transfer programmes at both national and partner level.
- Activate community-based organizations and networks to determine their seed and food reserves in the face of severe weather scenarios, their best alternatives for nutrition-sensitive production, and incorporate knowledge and use of agroclimatic information in their decision-making. Promote strategic reserves of basic grains at community and municipal level to cushion against increasing food prices.

Haiti

Key drivers of food insecurity: organized violence, economic crisis, below-average agricultural production and hurricanes

A deteriorating security situation, the protracted economic crisis, low agricultural production and the potential impact of hurricanes are likely to drive already critical levels of acute food insecurity.

Violence by NSAGs will likely continue to escalate, disrupting markets and access to, and delivery of, humanitarian assistance, with severe consequences on displacement and food security. The incidence of murder and kidnapping in Haiti rose for the fifth consecutive year,[135] while violence-induced displacement affected almost 200 000 people as of June 2023.[136] NSAGs are seeking to further expand and control new territories, triggering new displacements. In October 2023, the United Nations Security Council approved a non-United Nations, multinational security support mission, upon the government's request. While full details remain to be resolved, the mission should reportedly provide operational support to the national police and help secure critical infrastructure and transit hubs such as the airport, ports, schools, hospitals and key intersections.[137, 138]

Inflation and food prices are likely to remain elevated, given the impact of insecurity, the low value of the gourde and limited market supply. The gourde depreciated by over 20 percent in mid-July 2023 compared with the same time in the previous year, despite having appreciated against the US dollar since mid-April 2023.[139] Given elevated import dependency, the low value of the currency will continue to support elevated food inflation, which increased by over 45 percent in May 2023 compared with the previous year.[140, 141]

As of late August 2023, the cereal harvest was nearing completion under poor crop conditions, and planting of the second season maize and bean crops started in August with concern due to residual dry conditions.[142] In addition, an above-normal hurricane season between June and November 2023 is likely,[143] which could result in flooding and crop damage, especially in low-lying areas.

Over 4.4 million people (almost half of the population analysed) are projected to face Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 and above) acute food insecurity between August 2023 and February 2024, of which around 1.4 million people (14 percent of the population analysed) were estimated to be facing Emergency (IPC Phase 4).[144] The percentage of people in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) has increased steadily over the past four years, despite a slight decrease this year compared with 2022. In addition, according to the results of the Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions (SMART) survey carried out in January 2023, the nutritional situation of children under 5 years of age reveals a rate of GAM of 7.2 percent at the national level, a situation that could worsen due to reduced access to health care because of insecurity.[145]

RECOMMENDATIONS
Anticipatory actions

- Provide early warning messages with tailored advice as well as anticipatory cash transfers to protect lives and allow action to mitigate crop damage in case a hurricane is expected to make landfall.
- Considering the forecasted above-average rains, distribute high-nutrient animal feed and administer animal health treatments to vulnerable livestock herders to pre-emptively address potential health issues in livestock.
- Distribute agricultural inputs and tools and provide technical assistance to cultivate short-cycle crop varieties for rapid food production, ahead of the second cropping (maize and beans) season.

RECOMMENDATIONS
Emergency response

The 2023 HRP calls for USD 420 million for food security and USD 31.7 million for nutrition interventions.[146]

- Ensure emergency humanitarian support reaches people facing Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 and above) acute food insecurity, focusing on the most vulnerable in Cité Soleil.
- Safeguard livestock resources and crop production (vulnerable to inflation and climate hazards) by providing agricultural inputs, livestock restocking and cattle vaccination.
- Implement cash transfer programmes for purchasing food and agricultural inputs, targeting especially families severely affected by inflation, restricted access to markets and conflict.
- Ensure access to livelihood and humanitarian assistance to all affected populations, including those in conflict-affected and hard-to-reach areas.
- Develop contingency plans to respond to natural disasters, such as floods and droughts, and ensure timely and effective response should the flood risk materialize.
- Scale up acute malnutrition prevention and treatment in areas indicating a growing prevalence of malnutrition, reinforcing integration with food security, WASH and health partners.
- Provide inputs and cash transfers to artisanal fishermen affected by hurricanes and storm surges.

RECOMMENDATIONS
Other actions

- Persist in efforts to maintain and extend barge and air travel options; secure a sustained humanitarian passageway through the Dominican Republic via both land and sea, for expedited sourcing of food during large-scale crises.

West Africa and the Sahel

Burkina Faso and Mali

Key drivers of food insecurity: conflict

Levels of acute food insecurity are likely to further increase in both countries, driven primarily by escalating violence, causing high numbers of civilian deaths, displacement, and disruption to trade and agricultural activities. Of particular concern are 45 200 people facing starvation and death as of August 2023.

Between January and August 2023, violence targeting civilians has increased by 38 percent in Mali compared to the same period last year and violence has spread to new locations in northern Mali.[147] The withdrawal of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) by the end of 2023 will likely exacerbate this development.[148] Conflict will likely drive new displacements, worsening already very high humanitarian access constraints.[149, 150] In addition, insecurity led to a reduction in the cultivated area in central and northern regions, which has reduced income from agricultural labour and is likely to cause localized production shortfalls. Furthermore, difficulties in accessing mineral fertilizers, due to high prices, are likely to impact yields.[151]

Burkina Faso remains the epicentre of violence across the region, with more than 1 600 civilians killed in 2023, an increase by 17 percent compared to the same period last year.[152] NSAGs are likely to continue increasing pressure on Ouagadougou, the only region in the country remaining relatively unaffected by escalating violence, and to further consolidate control in the west and south of the country.[153] Access constraints are likely to remain very high in these regions, with NSAGs cutting residents off from essential services and food, as well as aid.[154] Insecurity is driving up food prices, with the price of millet and imported rice increasing by 27 percent and 20 percent respectively in July 2023 compared with the five-year average.[155] Total domestic cereal production in 2023 is likely to be below average due to the abandonment of fields, reduction in the cultivated area and limited

access to fertilizers.[156] Erratic rainfall distribution has had a negative impact on crop development in Burkina Faso,[157] which could lead to production shortfalls.

The deterioration of security is likely to bring food insecurity levels further up in the outlook period, beyond existing forecasts. In Mali, 1.26 million people were projected to face Crisis or worse (CH Phase 3 and above) levels of acute food insecurity during the June–August 2023 lean season, including more than 76 000 people in Emergency (CH Phase 4) across Mopti, Gao and Ménaka regions, and more than 2 500 facing Catastrophe (CH Phase 5) in Ménaka.[158] In the same period, around 3.4 million people were forecast to face Crisis or worse (CH Phase 3 and above) levels of acute food insecurity in Burkina Faso, with 600 000 people facing Emergency (CH Phase 4) across Boucle du Mouhoun, Centre-Nord, Est, Nord and Sahel regions, and 43 000 people in Catastrophe (CH Phase 5) in the Sahel and Boucle du Mouhoun regions, with a high concentration of people facing starvation and death in towns besieged by NSAGs such as Djibo.[159] In Mali, nearly 1 million children under 5 years of age irisk sliding into acute malnutrition.[160] In Burkina Faso, very high and high prevalence of GAM was identified in several localities.

RECOMMENDATIONS
Anticipatory actions

- Develop production sites and distribute home-gardening inputs to the most vulnerable households, including IDPs and host populations, to support low-mobility agricultural activities and protect agropastoral livelihoods.
- Promote fodder crops and strengthen the capacity of herders to produce food supplements for their livestock while raising awareness on strategic destocking.
- Strengthen seasonal vaccination programmes for livestock, to limit epizootics.
- Provide anticipatory cash assistance (conditional and unconditional) as well as disseminating climate information.

RECOMMENDATIONS
Emergency response

The Burkina Faso 2023 HRP calls for USD 322.2 million for food security and livelihoods and USD 54.3 million for nutrition interventions.[161] The Mali 2023 HRP calls for USD 274.5 million for food security and livelihoods and USD 71.3 million for nutrition interventions.[162]

- Scale up life-saving assistance to meet the vital needs of crisis-affected populations. Prioritize a cash+ strategy to assist vulnerable households facing Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 and above) levels of acute food insecurity, to meet their immediate food and livelihood needs.
- Provide support to market gardening to produce healthy and diversified foods.
- Distribute livestock feed (including mineral blocks) and vaccinations, establish fodder plots, and provide livestock to conflict-affected and displaced households.
- Provide an integrated nutrition package, including both prevention and treatment elements, to vulnerable households affected by crisis based on a needs assessment.

RECOMMENDATIONS
Other actions

- Scale up the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) to allow humanitarian actors to access difficult areas to save lives.
- Implement conflict-sensitive approaches, especially in relation to land access and natural resource management, to avoid exacerbating conflict and to maximize impact for supported communities.

Chad

Key drivers of food insecurity: refugee influx, spillover of violence from the Sudan, dry spells and flooding

Acute food insecurity, already at an unprecedented level, is expected to deteriorate due to the effects of conflict in the Sudan, insecurity and a risk of flooding.

The escalation of conflict in the Sudan in April 2023 has led to the influx of over 420 000 Sudanese refugees and Chadian returnees as of September 2023, mostly into Ouaddaï, Wadi Fira and Sila regions, with an additional 200 000 people expected to arrive by the end of 2023.[163] Acute food insecurity among refugees, returnees and host populations has significantly worsened due to increasing pressure on food stocks and livelihoods, and disruptions in food trade following the border closure with the Sudan, as well as depletion of natural resources, amid limited humanitarian assistance.[164] The conflict in the Sudan has heightened the risk of spillover of violence into eastern Chad as well as political instability in N'Djamena,[165] after a volatile transition in 2022 and the return of Chadian NSAGs from Libya.[166] In the Lac region, which hosts about 255 000 IDPs, insecurity driven by NSAGs persists and continues to disrupt livelihoods and cross-border trade, forcing displaced persons and host households to resort to crisis adaptation strategies.[167]

The rainfed agricultural season was disrupted by irregular rains, characterized by a delayed onset and subsequently punctuated by prolonged dry spells. Below-average rainfall in August 2023

negatively affected cereal crops during critical growth stages in localized southern areas.[168] Forecasts for the remainder of the season indicate above-average precipitation in eastern and southern areas, heightening the risk of localized flooding.[169]

According to the July update of the March 2023 CH analysis, about 2.3 million people (13 percent of the population) were acutely food insecure and in need of urgent assistance (CH Phase 3 and above) during the June–August 2023 lean season, including approximately 218 000 people in Emergency (CH Phase 4).[170] The update included a reassessment of Ouaddaï, Wadi Fira and Sila regions, where over 700 000 people were estimated to face high levels of acute food insecurity – a 64 percent increase compared with the March 2023 analysis – while about 158 000 people were estimated to be in Emergency (CH Phase 4), an increase of 189 percent.[171, 172] Actual figures are likely to be higher as the update did not include Sudanese refugees, among whom 80 percent were reported to have poor or borderline food consumption during the 2023 lean season.[173] In refugee camps, a proxy prevalence of acute malnutrition of nearly 30 percent was reported among children under 5 years of age in September 2023.[174]

RECOMMENDATIONS

Anticipatory actions

- During the dry season, distribute inputs for home gardening to vulnerable communities in the country, to protect agropastoral livelihoods.
- Strengthen seasonal vaccination programmes for livestock, to limit epizootics ahead of the pastoral season.
- Distribute home gardening inputs to IDPs and host populations in the Lac region, to support low-mobility agricultural activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Emergency response

The Chad 2023 Revised HRP calls for USD 225.5 million for food security and livelihoods and USD 91.3 million for nutrition interventions.[175]

- Scale up immediate life-saving assistance to Sudanese refugees, IDPs, returnees and vulnerable host communities. This includes general food assistance and livelihood restoration support activities, as well as prevention and treatment of malnutrition for children under 5 years of age and pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls.

Niger

Key drivers of food insecurity: macroeconomic challenges, high food prices, political instability and conflict

Acute food insecurity could worsen further during the outlook period due to a combination of conflict, high food prices, difficulties in aid delivery, macroeconomic challenges and political instability as we enter in the harvest season.

The sanctions by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) following the military coup and imposed at the peak of the lean season in August 2023[176] are likely to severely impact the economy. The subsequent suspension of commercial and financial transactions, border closures, and freezing of government public assets, state and parastatal enterprises[177] are expected to cause shortages of essential and non-essential goods and to impair government services, including electricity provision. This will likely result in price spikes, including of food,[178] compounded by further drops of foreign reserves, generating a liquidity crisis and increasing the risk of debt default.[179, 180]

Violence will likely surge in the outlook period due to the risk of NSAG insurgency to expand further into the regions of Tahoua, Tillabéri, Diffa and Maradi,[181] exploiting the diplomatic isolation and a likely more permissive security environment. This increase in conflict will likely affect markets and agricultural production, and lead to the displacement of more people.[182, 183]

The economic fallout from the coup and a surge in violence are expected to aggravate already high levels of acute food insecurity. During the June–August 2023 lean season around 3.3 million people (13 percent of the population) were projected to be in Crisis or worse (CH Phase 3 and above) levels of acute food insecurity, including 150 200 in Emergency (CH Phase 4). This is the second highest figure since the inception of the CH in the Niger in 2012.[184] The estimated number of nearly 1.9 million children under 5 years of age expected to be acutely malnourished in 2023 will likely increase.[185] Border closures are already affecting humanitarian assistance, with about 90 000 malnourished children under 5 years of age at risk of not receiving specialized nutritious foods.[186]

The potential enacting of additional measures by ECOWAS, including the use of force, may further affect food security due to their economic and security impact.[187]

RECOMMENDATIONS
Anticipatory actions

- Promote integrated approaches to safeguard pastoralist households' livelihoods, including cash+ assistance and animal health interventions.
- Promote fodder crops and strengthen the capacity of herders to produce food supplements for their livestock.

RECOMMENDATIONS
Emergency response

The Niger 2023 HRP calls for USD 141.2 million for food security and livelihoods and USD 83.4 million for nutrition interventions.[188]

- Provide unconditional food assistance to all new forcibly displaced populations, including IDPs and new refugees in crisis-affected areas (Tillabéri, Diffa, Tahoua and Maradi regions), as well as to potential flood victims.
- Provide access to healthy, diversified food and nutrients for the most vulnerable households through food assistance and support to crop food and market gardening production, during the pastoral season.
- Strengthen livelihoods assistance through improved access to agricultural inputs, including seeds and tools, veterinary kits, livestock feed and livestock reconstitution.
- Scale up malnutrition prevention and treatment activities for children (under 5 years of age) and pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls.

RECOMMENDATIONS
Other actions

- Continue advocacy to facilitate the production of data on food security and adequate monitoring of the impact on affected communities.
- Continue advocacy to exempt the United Nations from ECOWAS sanctions, specifically to ensure the import of necessary goods.
- Promote more nutritional education actions to better prevent acute malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies.

East Africa

Djibouti

Key drivers of food insecurity: high food prices, extended impacts of drought and reduced incomes

A sharp deterioration in critical levels of acute food insecurity is likely in the outlook period, driven by high food prices, low crop production and agricultural incomes, disease outbreaks, and the impact of the 2020–2023 drought, which killed half of the country's livestock.[189]

Despite the overall good 2023 March–May *diraac/sougum* rains,[190] above-average temperatures from July to December will worsen acute food insecurity due to intensified transhumance, restricting children's access to milk, and reduced labour opportunities, as wealthier households who employ labourers move to cooler areas.[191] As of July 2023, an estimated 31 000 refugees and asylum-seekers, mainly from Somalia and Ethiopia, were living mostly in camps where they lack livelihoods options,[192] 45–50 percent of them are projected to face high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 and above) up to December 2023.[193]

Since the June release of the IPC, the July–September *karan/karma* rains were poor, affecting rangelands.[194, 195] Forecasts suggest an increased probability of above-average October–December rains and high temperatures, increasing flooding risk particularly in coastal areas.[196] Additionally, July wheat prices in the Dikhil and Obock regions were 18–30 percent above the five-year average due to global price dynamics and Djibouti's elevated import dependency. [197]

From July to December 2023, 285 000 people (24 percent of the population) are projected to face high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 and above), including 100 000 people in Emergency (IPC Phase 4).[198] This is a sharp deterioration compared with the same period in 2022, with a 49 percent increase in the population in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 and above) and a sevenfold increase in the population facing Emergency (IPC Phase 4).[199] Rural populations and refugees are most affected. More than 33 000 children were also projected to face acute malnutrition in 2023, including over 5 500 children facing severe levels.[200]

RECOMMENDATIONS
Anticipatory actions

Based on specific forecasts of above-average rains and flooding:

- Support livestock disease surveillance and vector control and scale up community animal health interventions and vaccination, given the increased risk of livestock diseases associated with above-average rains and flooding.
- Reinforce, rehabilitate and support at-risk irrigation canals and systems, public wells and their flood protections, dykes and water retention systems in farmlands to mitigate floods and reduce soil erosion (including through cash for work).

RECOMMENDATIONS
Emergency response

- Scale up cash+ programmes that combine cash with input packages and livelihood kits to support households in both meeting immediate food assistance needs and engaging in productive activities.
- Provide supplementary livestock feed to drought-affected pastoral and agropastoral households to secure livestock assets and ensure sustained access to milk, especially for children under 5 years of age.
- Provide nutrition assistance to pregnant and breastfeeding women and children, through both treatment and prevention of malnutrition, in areas with high malnutrition rates and/or food insecurity, and reinforce integration with WASH interventions and health partners.

RECOMMENDATIONS
Other actions

- Support the national social protection system, to respond to trends of increasing acute food insecurity among the most vulnerable categories of the population.
- Issue timely early warning messages in collaboration with the meteorological department.
- Distribute timely livelihood packages, including inputs (seeds, agricultural tools, veterinary drugs, etc.) and services (irrigation hours, tractor hours, etc.) to enable households to take advantage of the above-average rains and support drought recovery.
- Promote fodder crops and strengthen the capacity of herders to produce food supplements for their livestock.

Ethiopia

Key drivers of food insecurity: extended impacts of drought and risk of floods, conflict and economic challenges

Despite a projected improvement in the food security situation countrywide during the second half of 2023 due to favourable rains and some improvements in security, acute food insecurity is expected to remain critically high.

Despite a relative stabilization in the Amhara region, after an escalation of violence in August 2023, a new surge of conflict remains likely in the outlook period.[201] The impact of the conflict on agricultural production is still unknown; however, the six-month state of emergency, announced in August, is expected to negatively affect production and marketing of agricultural products. Fighting also persists in Oromia region.[202] Further displacements in the country are likely, rising even higher than the more than 4.4 million people displaced by conflicts as of August.[203] Inflows from the Sudan are also likely to continue, adding to the 33 000 arrivals so far.[204]

In the south and southeast, the lingering impacts of a three-year drought continue to affect households.[205, 206] The June–September rains were uneven and provided adequate rainfall in most western cropping areas, and below-average rains in central and eastern Oromia and in in the former Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region (SNNPR). Dry spells in July were also observed in eastern Amhara and eastern Tigray.[207] In areas with precipitation deficits, along with input access constraints and low planting rates due to conflict, production shortfalls are expected.[208, 209] The current effects of El Niño and a positive IOD are likely to drive above-average rains in the east and south from October to December, which will likely foster drought recovery but could cause floods.[210]

Public debt remains unsustainably high,[211] with the largest item of government spending budgeted for debt service in the 2023/24 financial year and cuts in social spending lowering support for vulnerable households.[212] A large current account deficit[213] and low foreign-exchange reserves[214] continue to drive depreciation, even more pronounced on the parallel market.[215] Although food inflation has recently declined, it remained extremely high at 28.2 percent in August 2023.[216] The continued removal of fuel subsidies and the expected continued currency devaluation are likely to further push up the cost of essential goods.

For the first half of 2023, 20.1 million people (17 percent of the population) were estimated to be acutely food insecure and in need of urgent assistance, according to the HRP.[217] According to FEWS NET, acute food insecurity is likely to deteriorate with the lean season beginning in early 2024, after a slight improvement in food availability and access due to the *Belg* harvests from August 2023

and the *Meher* harvest from October to December 2023.[218] However, according to FEWS NET, even during the harvest period, levels of acute food insecurity will likely remain high, especially in Tigray and the pastoral south and southeast where households are still recovering from the impact of conflict and drought.[219] The situation is compounded by the pause in humanitarian food assistance through international pipelines for over four months.[220] Malnutrition rates also remain high in several regions.[221]

RECOMMENDATIONS
Anticipatory actions

- Disseminate accessible, timely flood early warning messages to at-risk communities about upcoming floods and support participatory evacuation planning.
- Support livestock disease surveillance and vector control, and scale up animal health interventions, given the increased risk of livestock diseases associated with above-average rains and flooding.
- Preposition sandbags to enable localized flood defence at high-risk points and provide support for government-led coordination.
- Provide forecast-based cash transfers to enable households to take their own actions to mitigate the impacts of forecast floods (e.g. evacuations).
- Preposition support to provide timely agricultural inputs to flood-affected households to enable them to engage in flood-recession agriculture and get some harvests despite crop losses.

RECOMMENDATIONS
Emergency response

The 2023 HRP calls for USD 276.5 million for agriculture, USD 2.16 billion for food and USD 359.2 million for nutrition interventions.[222]

- Mobilize resources for emergency food response through in-kind and cash assistance, to assist the most food-insecure people, including IDPs in conflict- and drought-affected regions.
- Scale up support for vulnerable households in drought-affected areas in southern and southeastern parts of the country.
- Scale up food and cash+ programmes that combine cash with input packages and livelihood kits to support households in both meeting immediate food assistance needs and re-engaging in productive activities.
- Provide supplementary livestock feed to flood-affected communities in cases where typical rangelands are inaccessible due to flood waters.
- Preposition food, nutrition, medical and water purification supplies and other critical non-food items to respond to the impacts of flood.
- Scale up nutrition prevention and treatment activities for pregnant and breastfeeding women and children in areas with high malnutrition rates and/or high food insecurity, and reinforce integration with food security, WASH, health and protection partners.

RECOMMENDATIONS
Other actions

- Improve flood early warning models and river level monitoring systems.

Somalia

Key drivers of food insecurity: extended impacts of drought, floods, conflict and high food prices

Acute food insecurity is expected to persist, driven by the lingering impacts of the 2020–2023 prolonged drought, the anticipated decline in the level of humanitarian assistance because of funding constraints and flooding resulting from an anticipated above-average 2023 October–December *Deyr* rainy season. Conflict and insecurity, as well as high food prices, continue to exacerbate needs.

The 2023 April–June *Gu* rainy season had a mixed performance. Average to above-average rains improved pasture and water availability in pastoral and agropastoral areas; however, rainfall deficits coupled with flash floods and river overflows caused crop losses, market access disruptions and displacement in southern Somalia.[223] As a result, the 2023 *Gu* season cereal production is estimated to be 34 percent below average. In the northwest, the 2023 *Gu/Karan* season cereal production, to be harvested in November, is estimated to be 60 percent below average.[224]

Forecasts for the October–December *Deyr* season point to above-average rains, driven by El Niño and a positive IOD, leading to an increased likelihood of overflooding of both the Juba and Shabelle rivers. Abundant rains will boost drought recovery in pastoral areas but heighten the risk of flooding,[225] with ensuing crop

losses, disruption to livelihoods and market access, and population displacement. Floods are likely to exacerbate needs in IDP camps and along riverine and low-lying areas by triggering further displacement.[226, 227] An estimated 1.6 million people are at risk of being affected by floods.[228]

As *Gu* harvests improved market availability, prices of maize and sorghum declined.[229] Prices are likely to remain stable except for in the northwest region (due to depreciation of the local currency) and along flood-affected areas (due to supply disruptions).[230, 231]

Between January and October 2023, over 600 000 Somalis were displaced due to conflict[232] – the same as the total for the whole of 2022. Conflict-induced displacement is likely to increase further in the outlook period driven by armed confrontation between government forces and insurgents as well as the ongoing conflict in the Sool region.[233]

Between October and December 2023, 4.3 million people (25 percent of the population) are projected to face high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 and above). This includes over 1 million people in Emergency (IPC Phase 4). This reflects a fragile recovery from a severe drought that resulted in projected famine in early 2023 which did not materialize. Acute malnutrition remains very high, with around 1.5 million children facing acute malnutrition between August 2023 and July 2024, including 331 000 children severely malnourished.[234]

RECOMMENDATIONS

Anticipatory actions

- Disseminate flood early warning messages to at-risk communities about upcoming floods and support participatory evacuation planning.
- Conduct contextualized assessments to map flood risk areas and produce periodic flood maps to inform flood mitigation and response activities.
- Provide forecast-based cash transfers to enable households to take their own actions to mitigate the impacts of forecast floods (e.g. evacuations).
- Continue livestock disease surveillance and vector control, and scale up animal health interventions, given the increased risk of livestock diseases associated with above-average rains and flooding.
- Preposition sandbags to enable localized flood defence at high-risk points and provide support for government-led coordination.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Emergency response

The 2023 HRP calls for USD 1.1 billion for food security and livelihoods and USD 431.3 million for nutrition interventions.[235]

- Scale up cash+ programmes that combine cash with input packages and livelihood kits to support households in improving immediate availability and access to food while enabling them to reengage in productive activities.
- Provide flood-responsive unconditional cash transfers to households displaced or affected by floods.
- Provide supplementary livestock feed to flood-affected communities in cases where typical rangelands are inaccessible due to flood waters.
- Scale up nutrition assistance to pregnant and breastfeeding women and children in areas with high malnutrition rates and/or high acute food insecurity and reinforce integration with WASH interventions and health partners.
- Maintain and scale up school meal programmes to keep children in schools, increase girls' enrolment and learning, improve health and nutrition, provide a safety net for vulnerable households, and mitigate the impact of the drought.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Other actions

- Encourage close collaboration between humanitarian and development actors to support diverse livelihood-based interventions that tackle the underlying causes of food insecurity and malnutrition.
- Strengthen early warning, anticipatory actions and investment in climate-resilient agriculture and food systems to enhance households' capacity to mitigate risks and shocks.
- Support the government's efforts in scaling up its shock response efforts to alleviate the suffering of people. This involves vertical and horizontal expansion of the Safety Net for Human Capital Development Project (Baxnaano), for the delivery of cash-based humanitarian assistance.
- Augment logistics coordination and services, in particular the transportation capacity of the government and partners to deliver urgent humanitarian assistance, especially to rural and hard-to-reach areas.
- Distribute timely livelihood packages, including inputs (seeds, fertilizers, hermetic bags, tools, etc.) and services (irrigation hours, tractor hours, etc.) to enable households to take advantage of the above-average rains and support drought recovery, including crop cultivation in riverine areas as flood waters recede.

South Sudan

Key drivers of food insecurity: returnee flow, subnational conflict, macroeconomic difficulties and flooding

High levels of acute food insecurity are expected to remain widespread, even after the start of the harvest in October, with concerns in particular for the border area between Upper Nile and Jonglei.

Rainfall deficits in central and northern unimodal areas had no major adverse effects on vegetation conditions.[236] Flood risks persist in northern flood-prone areas where flooding is mostly caused by river overflow related to water levels in the Lake Victoria Basin.[237] Forecast heavy rain in southern parts of the country is likely to cause flash flooding, with a high likelihood of disease outbreaks due to prolonged water stagnation and contamination of drinking water sources. The anticipated floods will also cause internal displacement for people living in flood-prone areas.[238]

As the conflict in neighbouring the Sudan continues, the increasing number of returnees will exacerbate pressure on scarce resources that could spark intercommunal conflicts and land disputes, particularly in Upper Nile State. As of September 2023, more than 258 000 people had arrived from the Sudan since April 2023, the large majority in Upper Nile State.[239] Clashes between the government and some opposition groups also persist, and tensions related to the 2024 national election are anticipated due to prevalent political and logistical challenges.[240]

Although food inflation is already at its highest, owing to the depreciation of the national currency and crop production deficits, no signs of improvement are anticipated. In northern areas of South Sudan, food prices have spiked due to disruptions in cross-border trade caused by the conflict in the Sudan.[241] The same conflict also poses a threat to South Sudan's oil exports, with potentially severe economic consequences for the country.

In the outlook period, acute food insecurity will remain at critical levels across the country. Between April and July 2023, about 7.8 million people (63 percent of the population) were projected to face Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 and above) levels of acute food insecurity, including 2.9 million people in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) and 43 000 people in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5).[242] A new analysis will be released soon. According to FEWS NET, high levels of acute food insecurity will remain widespread even after the harvest begins in October.[243] Concerns are particularly high for the border area between Jonglei and Upper Nile states, where conflict dynamics remain unstable amid returnee influx from the Sudan and competition over scarce resources.[244] Severe acute malnutrition admissions have increased by 4 percent in 2023 compared with 2022. Recent SMART surveys identified GAM rates above the emergency threshold in five out of six surveys.[245]

RECOMMENDATIONS
Anticipatory actions

- Disseminate flood early warning messages to at-risk communities about upcoming floods and support participatory evacuation planning.
- Preposition sandbags to enable localized flood defences at high-risk points and provide support for government-led coordination.
- Continue livestock disease surveillance and vector control and scale up animal health interventions, given the increased risk of livestock diseases associated with above-average rains and flooding.
- Provide forecast-based cash transfers to enable households to take their own actions to mitigate the impacts of forecast floods (e.g. evacuations).

RECOMMENDATIONS
Emergency response

The 2023 HRP calls for USD 650 million for food security and livelihoods and USD 230 million for nutrition interventions.[246]

- Maintain emergency life-saving assistance at border points with the Sudan to support new arrivals of refugees, returnees and third-country nationals. Continue providing and scaling unconditional cash transfers where market conditions allow to support newly displaced populations to prioritize their own needs. Ensure strong protection programming at border points to identify high-risk cases and refer to specialized protection agencies.
- Provide supplementary livestock feed to flood-affected communities in cases where typical rangelands are inaccessible due to flood waters.
- Maintain nutrition assistance to pregnant and breastfeeding women and children in areas with high malnutrition rates and/or high food insecurity, and reinforce integration with WASH, health and protection partners, including prevention of gender-based violence.

RECOMMENDATIONS
Other actions

- Advocate and negotiate for principled and sustained humanitarian access and the protection of civilians in conflict-affected areas, to enable households to receive humanitarian assistance and services, and aid agencies to operate freely and safely.

Southern Africa

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Key drivers of food insecurity: conflict

Armed conflict in eastern provinces and intercommunal violence in western provinces are likely to further intensify in the outlook period, driving new displacements and disrupting livelihoods, leading to a deterioration of acute food insecurity.

In August 2023, a surge in NSAG-related violence, mainly targeting civilians in Ituri and North Kivu provinces,[247] points towards a new wave of violence in the months ahead. The accelerated withdrawal of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) forces, albeit unlikely to begin before early 2024, could expose communities to new attacks.[248] Intercommunal violence is likely to increase around the December 2023 general elections,[249, 250] especially in western provinces such as Maï-Ndombe, where violence spiked during the 2018 elections.[251] Access constraints remain very high due to insecurity, compounded by the scale and frequency of displacements and returns.[252]

The depreciation of the Congolese franc and foreign currency scarcity have contributed to increasing food prices.[253] Maize flour, beans and vegetable oil recorded an 18 percent year-on-year increase in June 2023, hindering households' access to food. The probable continuous weakening of the currency, coupled with insecurity and displacements,[254] are likely to impact agricultural livelihoods and food availability during the next agricultural season.

Between January and June 2024, a total of 23.4 million people (22 percent of the population analysed) are projected to face Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 and above) levels of acute food insecurity, including 2.9 million people in Emergency (IPC Phase 4).[255] Conflict will continue to underpin elevated levels of acute food insecurity in eastern provinces. Preliminary findings from an ongoing SMART survey indicate high to very high levels of acute malnutrition in Ituri and North Kivu. Malnutrition is compounded by cholera and measles outbreaks,[256] weighing heavily on the already stretched health system.[257]

RECOMMENDATIONS
Anticipatory actions

- Preposition humanitarian food and nutrition assistance and agricultural stocks in strategic locations, ahead of the rainy season and in anticipation of procurement and transport challenges, and provide rapid support to households impacted by new episodes of conflict.
- Provide cash+ livelihoods assistance to vulnerable, rural households in conflict-affected regions, as a means of mitigating a potential deterioration in food security.

RECOMMENDATIONS
Emergency response

The 2023 HRP calls for USD 1.1 billion for food security and USD 272.2 million for nutrition interventions.[258]

- Scale up food, nutrition and livelihood assistance in eastern areas of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to address increasing needs owing to the upsurge in conflict, with particular focus on North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri.
- Strengthen animal health and livestock production, and enhance fish production in food-insecure areas.
- Ensure adequate nutrition and health support to displaced people in camps, in particular children and pregnant and breastfeeding women affected by conflict.

RECOMMENDATIONS
Other actions

- Strengthen interagency contingency planning and preparedness to anticipate risks, namely largescale displacements and acute food insecurity caused by conflict and other crises within a shrinking humanitarian space context.

Malawi

Key drivers of food insecurity: high food prices and extreme weather events

High prices of staple foods and the impact of Cyclone Freddy are the primary drivers of an expected deterioration in acute food insecurity during the outlook period.

Set against a high incidence of poverty,[259] persistently elevated food inflation rates that exceeded 30 percent during the first half of 2023 have eroded households' purchasing power, limiting access to food.[260] Despite abating pressures in the global food market, a weak currency is fuelling domestic price growth.[261] Added pressure from a low 2023 cereal harvest, and consequently reduced national supplies, pushed maize grain prices sharply higher between June and August 2023, when prices reached near-record highs.[262]

Cyclone Freddy struck the country in March 2023 causing USD 110 million worth of damage and losses to the agriculture sector alone, mostly in the southern part of the country.[263] Damage to crops and livestock deaths resulted in widespread income losses, increasing poverty and potentially engendering long-term nutrition impacts on the affected population.[264] Damage to irrigation infrastructure could also impact productive capacities in the next cropping season. The area affected by Cyclone Freddy was already dealing with a cholera outbreak, increasing the risk of malnutrition.

A further cause of concern is the potential effect of El Niño, which is associated with reduced rains in the country, particularly in the Southern Region. A poor rainy season and consequently diminished agricultural activity could suppress labour demand, further curbing rural households' incomes, while rainfall shortages may reduce crop yield. In the outlook period, 4.4 million people (22 percent of the population) are projected to face Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 and above) levels of acute food insecurity[265] – an increase of 600 000 people compared with the preceding year – including 266 000 people foreseen to face Emergency (IPC Phase 4), all located in the Southern Region.

RECOMMENDATIONS
Anticipatory actions

- Develop and disseminate agricultural advisory messages to raise awareness on expected impacts of El Niño-induced hazards (droughts and dry spells).
- Distribute agriculture input packages including short-cycle, drought tolerant seed varieties ahead of the planting season (November–December) – e.g. maize, main cereal crop seeds, assorted vegetable seeds and legume seeds – together with hermetic grain storage bags.
- Preposition agricultural inputs and food products which could be stored and distributed in case of an emergency during the upcoming main rain and agricultural season.

RECOMMENDATIONS
Emergency response

- Establish and rehabilitate irrigation facilities and community watering points and identify perennial water sources to enhance access to and availability of water for livestock and agricultural use.
- Provide cash+ packages that combine cash with input packages and livelihood kits to support households in both meeting immediate food assistance needs and engaging in productive activities.
- Provide nutrient supplements and animal health services to safeguard pastoral and agropastoral livelihoods.

RECOMMENDATIONS
Other actions

- Provide technical assistance to the National Food Reserve Agency to enhance lean season response efficiencies.
- Prioritize preparedness measures for the upcoming rainy season in close collaboration with the Government of Malawi.

Zimbabwe

Key drivers of food insecurity: persistent economic challenges, below-average rainfall and crop reduction

The food security situation is forecast to remain stressed, reflecting the impact of a continued deterioration of living conditions.

Living conditions in Zimbabwe have been affected by high inflation rates that reached triple digits in 2023, spiking to 175 percent in June[266] and erratic rainfall during the 2022/23 agricultural season in localized areas. The prospect of a drier-than-average cropping season in 2023/24 (October–May), due to El Niño, is seen as a significant risk to food security over the next six months.

Weak economic growth and triple-digit inflation have significantly eroded the purchasing power of the population, in a context where 41 percent live below the poverty line,[267] constraining access to food and essential services. Although inflation decelerated in July 2023,[268] the annual food inflation rate was estimated at 71 percent in August 2023,[269] and these elevated prices remain a significant stressor of food security.

Reports already indicate reduced agricultural outputs for the October 2022 to May 2023 season in southern provinces due to unfavourable weather conditions. Livestock conditions are deteriorating rapidly because of an early end to the previous rainy season, leading to a decline in livestock prices and an alarming increase in levels of disease among livestock, exacerbated by prohibitively expensive veterinary care and input costs.[270]

Looking ahead, the latest forecasts for the 2023/24 rainy season (October–March) indicate a very high likelihood of below-average rainfall in large parts of the country,[271, 272] including the main producing areas in the north and east.[273] With El Niño ongoing – and underpinning this unfavourable rainfall outlook – there is at least an 80 percent chance this will persist through May 2024, raising the risk of poor agricultural output, which would limit agricultural labour opportunities and be a significant stressor of food insecurity.

According to FEWS NET, the latest analysis suggests that up to 3.5 million people will be acutely food insecure and in need of urgent assistance (IPC Phase 3 and above) during the peak of the 2024 lean season (February), with a detrimental impact on the nutritional status of children and women.[274]

RECOMMENDATIONS

Anticipatory actions

- Facilitate dissemination of drought-related early warning messages (including on livestock diseases and pests) at community level.
- Distribute drought-tolerant seeds (sorghum, millet and cowpea seeds) together with organic enhanced fertilizers to promote climate-smart conservation and agricultural practices.
- Provide in-kind food assistance/unconditional cash transfers ahead of the impacts of El Niño.
- Scale up training and awareness on conservation agriculture (*Pfumvudza*) practices, to minimize crop losses in the upcoming season.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Emergency response

- Provide cash+ programmes that combine cash with input packages and livelihood kits to support households in both meeting immediate food assistance needs and engaging in productive activities during the lean season.
- Provide supplementary feed, nutrient supplements and animal health services to safeguard agropastoral livelihoods.
- Establish and rehabilitate community watering points and identify perennial water sources to enhance access to, and availability of, water for livestock and agricultural use.

Near East and North Africa

Palestine

Key drivers of food insecurity: conflict

Acute food insecurity is highly likely to severely deteriorate during the outlook period, as a result of the severe escalation of conflict in Palestine and Israel in October 2023.

At the time of writing, intense strikes on the Gaza Strip are ongoing, following a spate of NSAG attacks from Gaza into southern Israel on 7 October 2023. The hostilities have resulted in the death of 3 000 people and at least 12 500 injures, as well as the rapid displacement of around 1 million people in the Gaza Strip, by 17 October 2023; over 350 000 people are taking shelter in United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) schools.[275] A complete blockade of the Gaza Strip, as of 9 October 2023, has halted all supplies of water, food and fuel – prompting the shutdown of the only power station in Gaza and triggering an immediate blackout across Gaza on 11 October 2023. Lack of electricity disrupts all economic activities, including in agriculture, fisheries, food processing and distribution, with the poultry and livestock sectors risking complete collapse.[276] This will have a detrimental effect on food security within the Gaza Strip. Attacks have destroyed or damaged several telecommunication installations, as well as WASH and health installations and residential buildings.

The escalation comes after months of a marked increase in the frequency of violent incidents in the West Bank which by September 2023 had nearly surpassed the level of violence in the entire year of 2022 – the most violent year since the end of the Second Intifada in 2005.[277] Sustained hostilities are expected to drive an exponential surge in the number of fatalities, displacement and destruction of properties and infrastructure, deepening the already devastating humanitarian impact of the fighting. There are significant concerns of a spillover of the conflict into neighbouring countries, particularly into Lebanon, which could further exacerbate the acute food insecurity situation in that country.[278] In the West Bank, already high levels of violence have significantly increased since the beginning of hostilities in the Gaza Strip, and a further intensification of fighting and unrest in the West Bank cannot be excluded.[279, 280] In both the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, severe mobility restrictions and border closures are likely to cause the depletion of food and fuel stocks.[281] This will compound on already very high humanitarian access constraints, further impeding humanitarian operations.[282]

According to the 2023 HNO, a total of 1.5 million people (28 percent of the population), were estimated to be facing acute food insecurity and needing immediate assistance between May and July 2022 – 1.2 million in the Gaza Strip and 353 000 in the West Bank. This equated to 53 percent of Gaza's population and 11 percent of the population of the West Bank.[283] Deteriorating security and economic conditions had most likely resulted in a worsening of the food security situation even before the escalation of conflict in October. The latter escalation of events is most likely to result in a further and very significant deterioration over the outlook period, particularly in the Gaza Strip.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Emergency response

Under the Flash Appeal released in October 2023, Palestine requires USD 294 million to address the most urgent needs of over 1.2 million people in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. This includes USD 132.7 million for food security interventions.[284]

- Endorse the plea from the United Nations Secretary-General for a ceasefire and the creation of a humanitarian passage to facilitate aid delivery to the Gaza Strip.
- Scale up life-saving food assistance to conflict-affected populations in response to escalating violence.
- Provide time-critical support to affected farmers, herders and fisherfolk whose livelihoods have been seriously affected by the destruction of, or damage to, land and productive assets due to the conflict.
- Conduct seasonal analysis of food production to meet local food consumption needs and identify the gaps that may require advance disbursement of cash-based interventions.
- Sustain and support analysis and monitoring systems to track price fluctuations and other indicators of economic instability to inform anticipatory action programming.
- Provide technical expertise to humanitarian partners while leveraging essential infrastructure to enable last mile delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Sudan

Key drivers of food insecurity: conflict, economic crisis and erratic rainfall

The devastating economic and social impact of the conflict compounded by erratic rainfall are driving dramatic levels of acute food insecurity.

Since the last edition of this report, fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces has become more complex and multilayered as additional groups are drawn in and local conflicts are exacerbated, in particular in the Darfur regions.[285, 286] The conflict is expected to further deepen over the forecast period, spilling into new geographic areas.[287] Displacement continues at a steady pace, with a staggering 4.2 million IDPs since the beginning of the conflict (nearly 10 percent of the population), in addition to almost 1.2 million people who left the country.[288] Khartoum remains the epicentre of displacement and fighting,[289, 290] resulting in the widespread destruction of key economic infrastructure and exacerbating pre-existing macroeconomic challenges, including inflation, currency depreciation and low levels of foreign currency reserves.[291] If these circumstances continue, it is expected that there will be a severe shortage in the supply of food and other essential commodities.

The conflict, as well as erratic rainfall, have created highly unfavourable prospects for the forthcoming summer crop harvest, which provides the bulk of cereal output, as well as the winter wheat harvest in March 2024. In the Greater Darfur and Greater Kordofan regions, insecurity prevented several farmers from accessing fields, reducing the cultivated area. In the main cereal-producing areas of the east and southeast, disruptions to the banking system barred farmers from accessing financial resources, resulting in an expected reduction of cereal production.[292] Animal disease outbreaks are expected to increase due to significant disruptions to veterinary services. In addition, an erratic temporal and spatial distribution of precipitation during the June–September rainy season, especially over southeastern cropping areas, affected vegetation conditions.[293]

During the July–September lean season, around 20.3 million people (42 percent of the population) were projected to face Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 and above) levels of acute food insecurity, including more than 6.3 million people in Emergency (IPC Phase 4). The highest levels of severity and prevalence of food insecurity are reported where the conflict is more intense, namely in the Greater Darfur and Greater Kordofan regions and Khartoum State.[294] The deterioration is staggering, with an almost 75 percent increase in high levels of acute food insecurity compared with the same period in 2022.[295] While the October 2023–February 2024 projection of the same analysis reported a reduction of acute food insecurity, this analysis is currently being reviewed to account for the impact of the conflict. The large-scale displacement and extensive disruption to agricultural production are likely to significantly hamper the usual seasonal improvement in the outlook period. Recent proxy nutrition data indicate alarming conditions, with acute malnutrition higher than 20 percent among refugees (of Sudanese and other nationalities) sheltering in neighbouring countries who fled the conflict.[296]

RECOMMENDATIONS

Emergency response

The revised 2023 HRP, which takes into account the escalating violence since April 2023, calls for USD 581.2 million for food security and livelihoods and USD 350.1 million for nutrition interventions[297] – a 33 percent and 83 percent increase, respectively, compared with the 2023 HRP (published in December 2022).

- Continue efforts to increase access to populations severely impacted by conflict and insecurity. Particular efforts needed to strengthen humanitarian access in Khartoum and in the Darfur and Kordofan states. Maintain and expand the provision of humanitarian assistance into the Darfur region, including cross-border assistance through Chad.
- Ensure integrated assistance to refugees in neighbouring countries (particularly the Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia and South Sudan) through the most appropriate modality, which is in-kind in certain locations and cash-based transfers where conditions allow.
- Scale up the provision of life-saving food, nutrition, livelihood and resilience initiatives, ensuring access to diversified food sources through the 2024 summer season.
- Provide emergency veterinary services (vaccination, deworming and treatment) to prevent and control epidemic and endemic diseases for animals owned by large pastoralist communities and vulnerable livestock owners.
- Control animal diseases and expand vaccination coverage against the most prevalent and devastating diseases of sheep, goats and cattle, including peste des petits ruminants, sheep and goat pox, foot-and-mouth disease, Rift Valley fever, black quarter, contagious bovine pleuropneumonia and haemorrhagic septicaemia.
- Scale up interventions targeted to support the coming winter agricultural season through provision of seeds and other production inputs.
- Distribute productive goats, high-nutrient concentrate feed and mineral licks to vulnerable livestock owners to ensure sustained access to milk and proteins.
- Provide appropriate fishing gears and boats to vulnerable fishers and support the effective functioning of cold chains.
- Scale up nutrition assistance to pregnant and breastfeeding women and children in areas with high malnutrition rates and/or high food insecurity, and reinforce integration with WASH, health and protection partners, including prevention of gender-based violence.

RECOMMENDATIONS
Other actions

- Support training on improved agronomic and nutritional practices, and livestock husbandry practices.
- Increase access to timely food security information, including on agricultural livelihood impoverishment for informed decision-making.

Syrian Arab Republic

Key drivers of food insecurity: economic crisis

The economic situation is likely to further deteriorate in the outlook period, exacerbating already high levels of acute food insecurity, amid a recent surge in conflict and uncertainty around the future of cross-border assistance in the northwest of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Rising prices of essential goods are expected to gravely affect households' purchasing power in the coming months, further reducing their ability to access food. Between January and July 2023, the price of the WFP food basket has risen by 27 percent.[298] The pace of currency depreciation accelerated in 2023, leading to the managed-floating Syrian pound exchange rate – introduced in February 2023 – to lose almost 40 percent of its value.[299, 300] Furthermore, in September the government announced the almost complete removal of subsidies on fuel,[301] which is likely to result in major additional expenditures for households, especially during the coming winter.

The expiry of the United Nations Security Council authorization of cross-border delivery of humanitarian assistance in July 2023 resulted in a temporary pause of cross-border assistance. While United Nations organizations resumed humanitarian assistance in the second half of September 2023,[302] uncertainty remains around the renewal of the government's consent to transporting assistance from Türkiye into the northwest of the Syrian Arab Republic in January 2024, especially as fighting between the government and NSAGs resumed in Idlib in August 2023.[303] Major clashes among NSAGs in September 2023 triggered the displacement of several thousand people in Deir ez-Zor governorate, amid a surge in attacks by the Islamic State in the same area.[304]

During the 2022/23 season, farmers and livestock herders faced high production and transportation costs, and erratic temporal distribution of rainfall,[305] as well as heatwaves and wildfires. Although wheat production is slightly higher than in 2021/22, it remains approximately 30 percent below the pre-conflict average (1986–2012).[306] In addition, WFP discontinued the provision of food assistance to 2.5 million out of 5.5 million people in July 2023 due to unprecedented funding shortfalls.[307]

The steep deterioration of the economic situation, compounded by localized conflict and assistance cuts, is likely to significantly amplify the worsening of food insecurity and malnutrition in the outlook period. Since the last edition of this report, no new data on acute food insecurity are available. Between August and October 2022, over 12 million people (55 percent of the population) were assessed to be acutely food insecure, including 2.6 million severely acute food insecure, based on WFP's CARI methodology.[308] The burden of acute malnutrition has also increased since 2022, particularly in the northwest of the Syrian Arab Republic where the rate of SAM among children has doubled.[309]

RECOMMENDATIONS
Emergency response

The 2023 HRP calls for USD 2.05 billion for food security and livelihood interventions and USD 188.2 million for nutrition activities.[310]

- Maintain life-saving food assistance, preventive and curative nutrition services, school-based programmes, and resilience building for conflict-affected populations.
- Enable local food production and strengthen capacity through the provision of cereal, legume and summer vegetable packages.
- Protect and restore livestock assets through the distribution of animal feed and the vaccination and treatment of animals.
- Support cash-for-work activities to rehabilitate irrigation canals, public wells and irrigation systems.

RECOMMENDATIONS
Other actions

- Establish and strengthen the capacity of essential services for local communities, including on early warning and disaster risk reduction systems, emergency response planning and implementation.

Yemen

Key drivers of food insecurity: protracted economic crisis and localized conflict

Acute food insecurity is expected to remain at critical levels during the outlook period, amid the protracted economic crisis worsened by an anticipated humanitarian funding shortfall, localized conflict and weather variability.

Despite stalled negotiations,[311, 312, 313] warring parties have largely remained in an informal state of ceasefire since October 2022 with sporadic clashes.[314] The security situation remains volatile due to the persistence of local conflict and the resumption of high-intensity warfare remains a threat. Moreover, access constraints resulting from the volatile political situation and bureaucratic hurdles remain a key impediment to humanitarian operations.[315] Lingering conflict and political instability are expected to deepen the protracted economic crisis, severely impacting the purchasing power of the most vulnerable.[316] Easing global food and fuel prices have contributed to a relative stabilization in the prices of food and fuel. However, low foreign currency reserves, declining crude oil exports and lower remittances led to a recent currency depreciation in the area controlled by the Government of Yemen (GoY).[317] The weak currency coupled with elevated dependency on imported goods could contribute to staple food prices trending seasonally higher in GoY areas.[318] As of July 2023, much of the country experienced dry conditions, resulting in vegetation stress particularly across the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden coasts, while some areas received abundant rainfall, leading to displacement and material damages.[319]

Moreover, funding shortfalls are likely to result in a significant scale-down of humanitarian food assistance during the outlook period, following drastic reductions through 2023.[320, 321] WFP expects that, without additional funding, 3 million people in the north and 1.4 million people in the south could be impacted by lower rations.[322]

While a new countrywide IPC analysis is being finalized, the latest available indicated that nearly 17 million people (53 percent of the population) were estimated to be in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 and above) levels of acute food insecurity between October and December 2022. According to a partial analysis covering areas under GoY control, positive developments between January and May 2023 compared with 2022 should be viewed as a temporary reprieve. The situation is projected to worsen between June and December 2023, when about 3.9 million people (41 percent of the population) are estimated to be in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 and above), including 1.1 million people in Emergency (IPC Phase 4).[323] Nearly 456 000 children under 5 years of age will likely suffer from acute malnutrition in the south throughout 2023, of which over 97 000 children are likely severely malnourished.[324]

RECOMMENDATIONS

Emergency response

The 2023 HRP calls for USD 2.2 billion for food security and agriculture and USD 398 million for nutrition interventions.[325]

- Provide emergency livelihood support and season-specific cash transfers to protect and restore livelihoods, while stimulating economic recovery to increase availability and access to secure, safe and life-saving food for the most vulnerable households.
- Provide emergency food assistance, school-based programmes and malnutrition prevention services to conflict-affected populations.
- Continue the provision of life-saving multipurpose cash assistance to IDPs affected by both natural and human-induced disasters, and to refugees and mixed migrants.

Glossary

Acute food insecurity

Acute food insecurity is any manifestation of food deprivation that threatens lives or livelihoods regardless of the causes, context or duration. The IPC/CH Acute Food Insecurity scale categorizes acute food insecurity into five phases of severity, ranging from IPC/CH Phase 1, corresponding to No/Minimal acute food insecurity, to IPC/CH Phase 5, corresponding to Catastrophe/Famine. Each of these phases has important and distinct implications for where and how best to intervene.

Chronic food insecurity

Chronic food security refers to food insecurity that persists over time, largely due to structural causes. Chronic food insecurity has relevance in providing strategic guidance to actions that focus on the medium- and long-term improvement of the quality and quantity of food consumption required for an active and healthy life.

Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC)

The IPC results from a partnership of various organizations at the global, regional and country levels, and is widely accepted by the international community as a global reference for the classification of food insecurity.

Cadre Harmonisé (CH)

The Cadre Harmonisé is the multidimensional analytical framework used by the Permanent Interstates Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), for the analysis and identification of areas and groups at risk of acute food insecurity in the Sahel, West Africa and Cameroon.

Emergency – IPC/CH Phase 4 of the Acute Food Insecurity Scale

Emergency (IPC/CH Phase 4) is a level of the Acute Food Insecurity Scale at which 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 by employing emergency livelihood strategies and asset liquidation. Households face critical levels of acute food insecurity/critical acute food insecurity. Urgent action is needed to save lives and livelihoods. If nothing is done, the population could face starvation or death.

Catastrophe – IPC/CH Phase 5 of the Acute Food Insecurity Scale

Catastrophe (IPC/CH Phase 5) is a level of the Acute Food Insecurity Scale at which households face 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. Urgent, immediate action is needed to stop widespread starvation and death, and the total collapse of livelihoods. Households can be in Catastrophe (IPC/CH Phase 5) even if areas are not classified in Famine (IPC/CH Phase 5).

Famine – IPC/CH Phase 5 of the Acute Food Insecurity Scale

Famine is the highest level of the Acute Food Insecurity scale. Famine exists in areas where at least one in five households has, or is most likely to have, an extreme deprivation of food and face starvation, death, destitution. Extremely Critical levels of acute malnutrition (at least 30 percent of children malnourished) and significant mortality, directly attributable to outright starvation or to the interaction of malnutrition and disease (at least 1 person for every 5 000 dies each day), are occurring. Urgent action is needed to stop widespread starvation and death.

Famine Likely – IPC/CH Phase 5 of the Acute Food Insecurity Scale

Famine Likely is the highest level of the Acute Food Insecurity Scale (Phase 5), used to classify situations when Famine is likely occurring. If there is insufficient data for Famine classification, usually because either nutrition or mortality data are lacking, but the available information indicates that Famine is likely occurring or will occur, then the Famine classification is called Famine Likely. Famine and Famine Likely are equally severe; the only difference is the amount of reliable evidence available to support the statement.

Risk of Famine

Risk of Famine refers to the reasonable probability of an area going into Famine in the projected period. While this is not perceived necessarily as the most-likely scenario, it is a worst-case scenario that generally has a realistic chance of occurring.

Food security

A situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. There are usually four dimensions of food security: food availability, food access, food utilization and stability over time.

Food access

Access by households/individuals to adequate resources for acquiring appropriate foods for a nutritious diet.

Food availability

The availability of sufficient quantities of food of appropriate quality, supplied through domestic production or imports.

Livelihoods

People's capabilities, assets – both material and social – and activities required for a means of living linked to survival and future well-being; and the policies and institutions that shape or constrain access to assets and choices about activities.

Coping strategies

Activities to which people resort in order to obtain food, income and/or other essential goods or services when their normal means of livelihood have been disrupted or other shocks/hazards affect their access to basic needs.

Malnutrition

Malnutrition is an umbrella term that covers undernutrition and overweight, obesity and diet-related non-communicable diseases such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and cancer. Undernutrition is a consequence of inadequate nutrient intake and/or absorption, and/or illness or disease. Acute malnutrition, stunting, underweight and micronutrient deficiencies are all forms of undernutrition.

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