

# 2023 GLOBAL REPORT ON FOOD CRISES

JOINT ANALYSIS FOR BETTER DECISIONS

## IN BRIEF

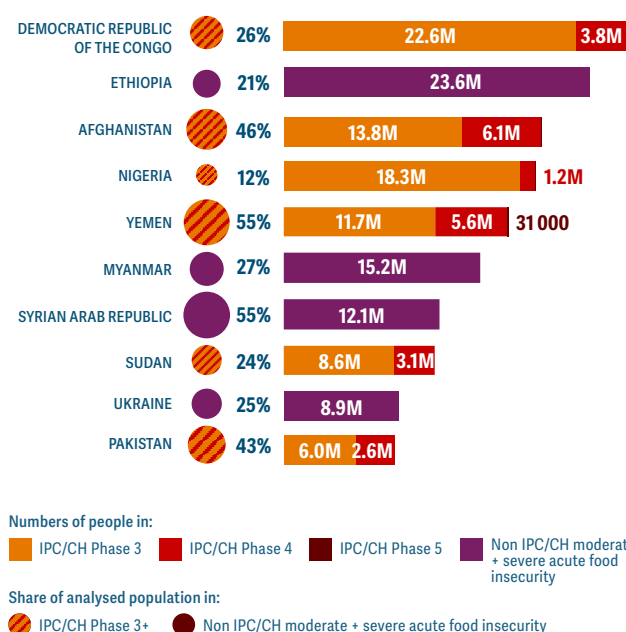
The Global Report on Food Crises (GRFC) 2023 estimates that over a quarter of a billion people were acutely food-insecure and required urgent food assistance in 58 food-crisis countries/territories in 2022. This is the highest number in the seven-year history of the GRFC.

The findings of the GRFC 2023 suggest that achieving the goal of ending hunger by 2030 is ever more challenging as the population facing high levels of acute food insecurity has increased for the fourth consecutive year.

Nearly 258 million people in 58 countries/territories were in Crisis or worse acute food insecurity (IPC/CH Phase 3 or above, or equivalent) in 2022 – up from 193 million in 53 countries/territories in 2021. As the graph (bottom right) shows, while there has been an increase in the population analysed, this is the highest on record since the GRFC started reporting these data in 2017.

This marks the fourth consecutive year of rising numbers of people in IPC/CH Phase 3 or above or equivalent due to persistently high numbers in some countries, worsening situations in others, as well as increased analysis.

### Countries/territories with the highest numbers of people in IPC/CH Phase 3 or above or equivalent in 2022 and the share of analysed population in these phases



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

**258M** people – **22.7%** of the analysed population – in **58 countries/territories** faced high levels of acute food insecurity in 2022

**253M** people were in Stressed (IPC/CH Phase 2) in **41 countries/territories** with IPC/CH analyses

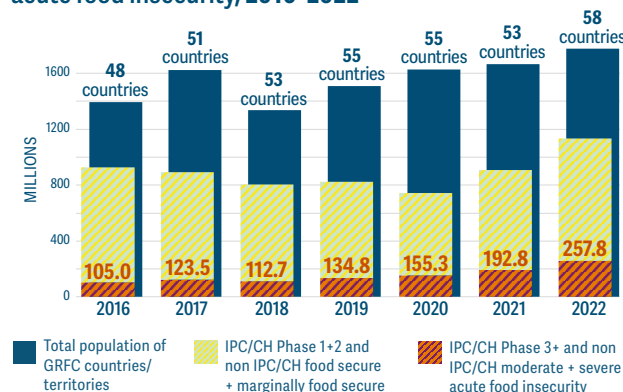
Source: IPC TWGs, 2022.

More than 40 percent of the population in IPC/CH Phase 3 or above or equivalent in the GRFC 2023 resided in just five countries/territories – the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Nigeria (21 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT)) and Yemen.

People in seven countries/territories faced extreme lack of food even after full employment of coping strategies at some point during 2022. More than half of the 376 400 people in Catastrophe (IPC/CH Phase 5) were in Somalia (214 100), but these extreme conditions also affected populations in South Sudan (87 000), Yemen (31 000), Afghanistan (20 300), Haiti for the first time in GRFC history (19 200), Nigeria (3 000) and Burkina Faso (1 800).

Around 35 million people were in Emergency (IPC/CH Phase 4) in 39 countries/territories. No disaggregated data by IPC phase were available for Ethiopia or Zimbabwe in 2022. Households in this

### Number of people in GRFC countries/territories facing acute food insecurity, 2016–2022



Source: FSIN, using data from 2016–2022.

extremely severe situation face large food gaps, which are either reflected in high acute malnutrition rates and excess mortality or mitigated by use of emergency coping strategies. Around half of the total population identified in IPC/CH Phase 4 was found in four countries – Afghanistan, Yemen, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Sudan.

**Recurrent shocks are driving up acute food insecurity**

The food crises outlined in the GRFC are the result of interconnected, mutually reinforcing drivers – conflict and insecurity, economic shocks and weather extremes. In 2022, these key drivers were associated with lingering socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19, the knock-on effects of the war in Ukraine and repeated droughts and other weather extremes.

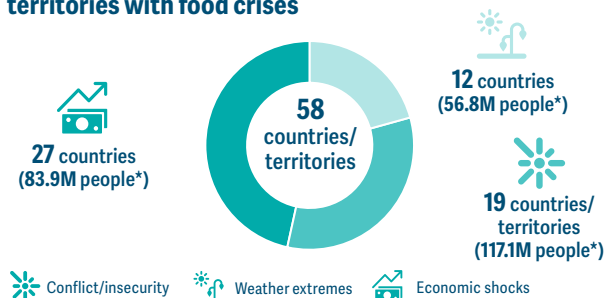
**Conflict/insecurity** was the most significant driver in 19 countries/territories where 117.1 million people were in IPC/CH Phase 3 or above or equivalent. This is fewer than in 2021 (24 countries/territories with 139 million people).

The lower estimate is because economic shocks surpassed conflict as the main driver of acute food insecurity in three countries still affected by protracted crises – Afghanistan, South Sudan and the Syrian Arab Republic. Six of the seven countries/territories with populations facing Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) – Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen – have protracted conflicts, while the very severe levels of acute food insecurity in Haiti are attributable to escalating gang violence in the capital.

**Economic shocks** (including the socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19 and the repercussions of the war in Ukraine) became the main driver in 27 countries with 83.9 million people in IPC/CH Phase 3 or above or equivalent – up from 30.2 million people in 21 countries in 2021. The economic resilience of poor countries has decreased, and they now face extended recovery periods and less ability to cope with future shocks.

**Weather extremes** were the primary driver of acute food insecurity in 12 countries where 56.8 million people were in IPC/CH Phase 3 or above or equivalent, more than double the number of people (23.5 million) in eight countries in 2021. These extremes included sustained drought in the Horn of Africa, devastating flooding in Pakistan, and tropical storms, cyclones and drought in Southern Africa.

**Primary drivers of acute food insecurity in countries/territories with food crises**

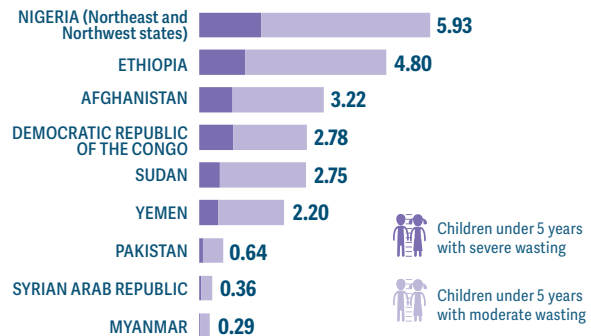


Food crises are the result of multiple drivers. The GRFC has based this infographic on the predominant driver in each country/territory.

\* Number of people in IPC/CH Phase 3 or above or equivalent.

Source: FSIN, GRFC 2023.

**Numbers of children with wasting in countries/territories with largest numbers of people in IPC/CH Phase 3 or above or equivalent in 2022**



Estimates for Nigeria cover only the Northeast and the Northwest states while estimates for Democratic Republic of the Congo cover 150 health zones and 189 territories. Data were not available for Ukraine.

Source: GRFC Displacement TWG, 2023.

**High levels of child wasting in food-crisis countries/territories curbs development and wellbeing**

Malnutrition is multidimensional, and child nutritional status is determined by multiple factors. The GRFC demonstrates that areas with high levels of acute food insecurity tend to have high levels of child wasting, which, when combined, stymie the development and wellbeing of populations in the short, medium and long term. In 30 of the 42 major food crises analysed in the GRFC 2023 where data on malnutrition were available, over 35 million children under 5 years of age suffered from wasting, with 9.2 million of them severely wasted (the most lethal form of undernutrition and a major contributor to child mortality). Out of the total estimated children with wasting in those countries, about 65 percent lived in nine out of the ten countries with the highest number of people in IPC/CH Phase 3 or above or equivalent.

The global food crisis has worsened the undernutrition situation of adolescent girls and women whose livelihoods, income and access to nutritious food have been disproportionately affected by conflict, climate change, poverty and other economic shocks, including that of the COVID-19 pandemic from early 2020 (UNICEF, March 2023).

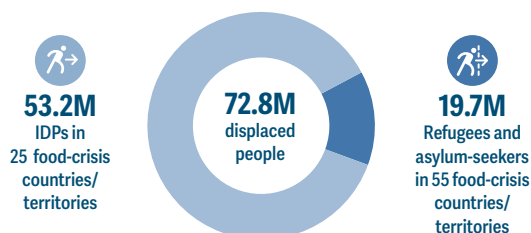
**Number of forcibly displaced people in food-crisis countries/territories is the highest in GRFC history**

Displacement is both a driver and a consequence of food insecurity. People forced to flee their homes lose access to their livelihoods (including safe access to food, water and other necessities) while also facing major barriers to income, humanitarian aid, healthcare, and other essential services, exacerbating their vulnerability to food insecurity and undernutrition.

By mid-2022, the number of displaced people globally, including refugees, asylum seekers, Internally Displaced People (IDPs) and other people in need of international protection, had reached 103 million, around 14 million more people than at the end of 2021 (UNHCR; IOM, December 2022).

In 2022, displacement was caused by (i) major conflicts, including the ongoing war in Ukraine and persisting conflicts in the Central

## Number of forcibly displaced people in food-crisis countries/territories, 2022



Source: GRFC Displacement TWG, 2023.

Sahel, the Lake Chad Basin and the Middle East; (ii) severe economic crises pushing people to migrate, such as from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and (iii) climate change and weather extremes including the atypical La Niña phenomenon that began in September 2020 and persisted to late 2022, exacerbating drought conditions in the Horn of Africa and causing unusually heavy rainfall and flooding in Asia, East Africa and West Africa.

By the end of 2022, nearly 53.2 million people were internally displaced in 25 countries/territories identified as food crises in the GRFC 2023. The countries/territories with the highest numbers of IDPs in 2022 nearly mirrored the list of the 10 food crises with the largest numbers of people in IPC/CH Phase 3 or above or equivalent.

In 2022, about 19.7 million refugees and asylum seekers were hosted in 55 out of the 58 food-crisis countries/territories identified in this GRFC edition, marking a significant increase from 15.3 million people in the 52 food-crisis countries/territories in 2021.

### ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY PROJECTION 2023

**152.0–153.4M** people – **18%** of the analysed population – in **38** countries/territories projected to face high levels of acute food insecurity in 2023

**251.0M** people were projected to be in Stressed (IPC Phase 2) in **34** countries/territories with available IPC/CH analyses

Source: IPC TWGs, 2022 and 2023, Cadre Harmonisé.

According to projections available for 38 of the 58 countries/territories as of March 2023, up to 153.4 million people are projected to be in IPC/CH Phase 3 or above or equivalent in 2023. However, the acute food insecurity situation in these food-crisis countries/territories is likely to be further affected by a number of shocks that occurred in early 2023 and were not factored into the available estimates. These include tropical cyclone Freddy in Madagascar, Malawi and Mozambique, the earthquakes in the Syrian Arab Republic and Türkiye, and the escalating conflict in the Sudan.

Around 310 000 people are projected to be in Catastrophe (IPC/CH Phase 5) across Burkina Faso, Haiti, Mali, Nigeria (26 states and the FCT), Somalia and South Sudan with almost three quarters of them in Somalia. No projection data are available for Yemen. In Somalia, a risk of Famine was still foreseen among agropastoral populations in Burhakaba district and IDP settlements in Baidoa and Mogadishu in April–June 2023 (IPC, February 2023).

## The impact of the war in Ukraine on food crises around the world

The war in Ukraine has had an outsized impact on global food systems due to the major contributions Ukraine and the Russian Federation make to the production and trade of fuel, fertilizers and essential food commodities like wheat, maize and sunflower oil. The timing of the war also contributed to this impact as higher international commodity prices in the first half of 2022 compounded the macroeconomic challenges that countries continued to face after the COVID-19 pandemic. This was particularly true for GRFC countries/territories as they were more likely to be exposed to commodity market volatility given many of their positions as low-income net food-importing countries.

Although global food prices had fallen by the end of 2022, they remained well above pre-pandemic levels. Domestic food prices, by contrast, experienced an increase but have yet to decline. In fact, food prices increased in all GRFC countries/territories in 2022, with food inflation being over 10 percent in 38 out of the 58 countries/territories with food crises by the end of the year. Their governments' abilities to mitigate risks and insulate citizens from food price inflation through policy measures, such as stimulus payments and subsidies, was limited given their over-extended public budgets after the COVID-19 pandemic. Nearly all of the countries whose currencies lost value at an abnormally fast rate in 2022 were GRFC countries/territories.

Economic shocks are projected to be the main driver of acute food insecurity in 22 of these countries/territories as national economic resilience has been severely undermined by a slow recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, exacerbated by the war in Ukraine. Persisting high food prices coupled with unsustainable debt levels in some countries amid high interest rates and currency depreciation are expected to further erode households' food access and constrain the fiscal capacity of governments to deliver assistance. As of March 2023, food prices were at exceptionally high levels in Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Myanmar, Namibia, Pakistan, Somalia, South Sudan and Zimbabwe.

Conflict/insecurity is forecast to be the main driver in ten of the countries/territories, including Ukraine.

Forecast to return in June 2023, the El Niño phenomenon is likely to result in dry weather conditions in key cropping areas of Central America, Southern Africa and Far East Asia, while excessive rainfall and possible flooding is foreseen in Near East Asia and East Africa.

In **Central and Southern Africa**, conflict/insecurity are expected to remain the primary driver of acute food insecurity in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Mozambique, while economic shocks, compounded by the knock-on effects of the war in Ukraine, are likely to further erode the purchasing power and resilience of households. Weather extremes including the February 2023 tropical cyclone Freddy in Madagascar, Malawi and Mozambique will undermine food security throughout 2023.

In **East Africa**, weather extremes including the three-year drought across the Horn of Africa, economic challenges, and the impact of conflict/insecurity on livelihoods, markets and humanitarian access continue to drive dire levels of acute food insecurity in many countries in 2023. Significant efforts in the scale-up of multi-sectoral humanitarian assistance, supported by slightly more favourable than foreseen rains are contributing to a moderate improvement in some areas, although livelihood recovery will take time. In the Sudan, the onset of clashes between the Sudanese Armed Forces and Rapid Support Forces in mid-April triggered a suspension of humanitarian assistance and will likely lead to a deterioration of livelihoods, internal displacement and acute food insecurity.

In **West Africa and the Sahel (including Cameroon)**, the levels of acute food insecurity during the June–August 2023 lean season are projected to be the highest on record, driven by worsening conflict and insecurity, particularly in the Central Sahel and Lake Chad Basin areas, and increased economic shocks, including rampant inflation and currency depreciation, notably in Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone and Liberia. At the country level, the number of people in CH Phase 3 or above is projected to increase in Nigeria (also due to expanding analysis coverage), Burkina Faso, Senegal, Liberia and Gambia – and decline in nine others. Burkina Faso and Mali have populations projected to be in IPC Phase 5.

In **Asia**, economic malaise including high food, fertilizer and fuel prices along with transport and supply chain disruptions, and limited resources to respond to increasing social and economic demands, will continue to drive acute food insecurity in Afghanistan, Bangladesh (Cox's Bazar), Myanmar and Pakistan. Weather extremes, conflict in Myanmar and the repercussions of decades of conflict in Afghanistan will remain important drivers.

In **Latin America and the Caribbean**, the number of people in IPC Phase 3 or above in 2023 is projected to decline at the regional level, largely due to increased food availability from the 2022 harvests in some countries, but this could be short-lived due to high food prices and low household purchasing power. In Haiti, the population facing high levels of acute food insecurity was projected to increase slightly, due to urban insecurity, gang violence and high inflation as well as the lingering impacts of previous natural disasters.

In the **Middle East and North Africa**, acute food insecurity is expected to worsen for Lebanese residents and Syrian refugees in Lebanon driven by further deterioration of the economic situation and rampant inflation. Even before the devastating February 2023 earthquakes, the 2023 food security outlook for the Syrian Arab Republic was precarious. Earthquake-affected areas were home to almost 3 million IDPs, and the destruction and losses of physical capital (especially in agriculture) are estimated at USD 5.2 billion. In Yemen, significantly above-average prices of food and essential non-food commodities are expected to drive large food

consumption gaps. Even though active fighting has abated in the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen, the impacts of conflict and mass displacement are expected to persist throughout 2023.

### The way forward

The magnitude of people facing IPC/CH Phase 3 or above is daunting, but it is that very scale that drives urgency. Earlier intervention can reduce food gaps and protect assets and livelihoods at a lower cost than late humanitarian response.

Yet too often the international community waits for a Famine (IPC/CH Phase 5) classification before mobilizing additional funding. By this stage, lives and futures have already been lost, livelihoods have collapsed, and social networks disrupted with deleterious impacts on the lives of an unborn generation.

Populations in IPC/CH Phase 3 are already unable to meet their minimum food needs or are compelled to protect food consumption by engaging in coping strategies that will harm their future ability to access food and sustain their livelihoods. In IPC/CH Phase 4, households face large food gaps, which are either reflected in high acute malnutrition levels and excess mortality or mitigated by using emergency coping strategies that severely corrode their wellbeing and livelihoods.

Urgent action is needed for households in IPC/CH Phase 3 and 4 to ensure immediate wellbeing, to support their ability to sustain themselves, and to protect families from making choices that are likely to lead to worse outcomes.

### What is the GRFC?

The GRFC 2023 is a collaborative effort among 16 partners to achieve an independent and consensus-based assessment of acute food insecurity that informs humanitarian and development action. Published by the Food Security Information Network (FSIN) in support of the Global Network against Food Crises (GNAFC), the GRFC is the reference document on global, regional and country-level acute food insecurity in 2022.

The analysis is based mainly on data obtained through the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) or the Cadre Harmonisé (CH), which estimate the populations in need of food, nutrition and/or livelihood assistance. When data from these sources are not available, the GRFC utilizes the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), the World Food Programme's (WFP) Consolidated Approach for Reporting Indicators (CARI) and country-specific Humanitarian Needs Overviews (HNO).

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