



Global Network
Against Food Crises



September 2020 UPDATE
In times of COVID-19

2020 GLOBAL REPORT ON FOOD CRISES

JOINT ANALYSIS FOR BETTER DECISIONS

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This update is one of a series of analytical, consensus-based products on food security, which are made possible thanks to the sustained financial contributions of the European Union and USAID. We are grateful for their commitment and support.



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ACRONYMS




ACLED	Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project	MUAC	Mid-Upper Arm Circumference
AfDB	African Development Bank	OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
AMN	Acute malnutrition	OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
CH	Cadre Harmonisé	PAHO/WHO	Pan American Health Organization
CILSS	Comité permanent inter-Etats de lutte contre la sécheresse dans le Sahel (Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel)	RPCA	Réseau de Prévention des Crises Alimentaires (Food Crisis Prevention Network)
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease	RVF	Rift Valley fever
ECLAC	United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean	SADC	Southern African Development Community
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States	SAM	Severe Acute Malnutrition
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	SICA	Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana (Central American Integration System)
FAO-GIEWS	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations – Global Information and Early Warning System	SIDS	Small Island Developing states
FCT	Federal Capital Territory	SMART	Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions
FEWS NET	Famine Early Warning Systems Network	SMEB	Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket
FSIN	Food Security information Network	SNNP region	Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region
FSNAU	Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit	SOFI	The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World
GAM	Global Acute Malnutrition	UN Habitat	United Nations Human Settlement Programme
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
gFSC	Global Food Security Cluster	UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
GHRP	(United Nations Global Humanitarian Response Plan	UN/DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
GNAFC	Global Network Against Food Crises	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
GRFC	Global Report on Food Crises	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus Infection and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome	UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
HNO	Humanitarian Needs Overview	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan	USAID	United States Agency for International Development
IDP	Internally displaced people	USD	United States Dollar
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute	WAHO	West African Health Organization
IFRC	International Federation of the Red Cross	WB	World Bank
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development (in Eastern Africa)	WFP	United Nations World Food Programme
ILO	International Labour Organization	WFP mVAM	United Nations World Food Programme mobile Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping
IMF	International Monetary Fund	WHO	World Health Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration	WHZ	Weight-for-length/height z-score
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification		

ICONOGRAPHY


Drivers of acute food insecurity

-  Conflict/insecurity/ political crises
-  Economic shocks
-  Weather extremes - prolonged dry spells, flooding and cyclones
-  Hazards – explosion
-  Health shocks
-  Locusts and other pests


Food security data analytics

-  Global publications
-  National/regional data analysis
-  Tools and methods

Displacement

-  Asylum seekers, IDPs, refugees, returnees, stateless people

Nutrition

-  Acute malnutrition (wasting)

COVID-19-related

-  Border restrictions
-  COVID-19
-  Containment measures
-  Physical distancing
-  Remote learning
-  Funding
-  Partnership

Notes on maps

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on all the maps in this document do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties.

Final boundary between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan has not yet been determined.

Final status of the Abyei area is not yet determined.

A dispute exists between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland concerning sovereignty over the Falkland Islands (Malvinas).

Introduction and methods



Why this update?

For the last four years, the *Global Report on Food Crises (GRFC)* has provided an annual, consensus-based overview of the severity, magnitude and drivers of the world's food crises.

The GRFC 2020 reported the highest global number of acutely food-insecure people on record. It revealed that in 2019, some 135 million in 55 countries and territories were in need of urgent food, livelihood and nutrition assistance as a result of conflict, weather extremes, economic shocks, or a combination of all three drivers. This figure reflected not only worsening levels of acute food insecurity in many countries, but also the wider availability of food security data, including in previously inaccessible areas or in contexts that had previously yielded poor-quality data.

In these 55 food crisis countries and territories, an estimated 75 million children were stunted and 17 million were suffering from acute wasting. Food insecurity and limited access to well functioning health, WASH and social protection systems increase the risk of malnutrition for the most vulnerable.

This GRFC 2020 September update in times of COVID-19 provides acute food insecurity data for 26 countries identified in the GRFC 2020 and also includes Togo in the report for the first time. The cut-off date for the information and data used to prepare this report was 30 September 2020.

Data sources

In keeping with GRFC methodology established for earlier reports, the main sources for acute food insecurity data for this September update are the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) and the Cadre Harmonisé (CH). Populations

in Crisis (IPC/CH Phase 3), Emergency (IPC/CH Phase 4) and Catastrophe (IPC/CH Phase 5) are those in need of urgent food, nutrition and livelihood assistance. Please see annex 1 for the IPC acute food insecurity reference table. For countries where IPC/CH analyses were not conducted, estimates of the number of people in need of food, nutrition and livelihood assistance were primarily derived from IPC-compatible analyses carried out by FEWS NET.

The IPC acute malnutrition analyses and the 2020 *Global Nutrition Cluster Mid-Year Report* are the main data sources for nutrition. Please see annex 2 for the IPC acute malnutrition reference table.

In addition to providing an update on the current and often mutually reinforcing drivers of acute food insecurity – conflict and insecurity, weather extremes, pest outbreaks and other natural hazards, and economic shocks, or a combination of all these main drivers – this report relies on a wide variety of sources to examine the pathways between COVID-19 and acute food insecurity. For more information on the way the GRFC analyses drivers, please refer to the 2020 GRFC.

Data challenges and limitations

In response to the declaration of the pandemic by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in March 2020, the food security and nutrition data community suspended in-person interaction, thereby halting traditional household data collection. Data that is usually obtained face to face was collected remotely and progressively scaled up to track the impact of COVID-19 on households' food security, livelihoods, access to health care and markets and inform analyses.

IPC and CH rapidly shifted from in-person to virtual multi-stakeholder training and online analysis. A complete virtual IPC/CH process was designed and rolled out at country level to continue producing IPC/CH analyses that are fully compliant with established protocols.

In addition to these adjustments, the need to meet the minimum evidence requirements in terms of coverage, data quality and robustness, led to the rescheduling of analyses for several food-crisis countries.

Out of the 70 countries and territories pre-identified and reviewed as potential food crises for the GRFC 2020, this update includes 27 that had an updated publically released analysis by 30 September 2020. The reader should be aware that many other countries/territories beyond these 27 are facing high levels of acute food insecurity in times of COVID-19. Table 1a, commencing on page 18, provides acute food insecurity data for 57 food crisis countries at their worse point in 2019. A more comprehensive picture of the magnitude of food crises in times of COVID-19 will be provided in the GRFC 2021, to be released early next year.

Around a third of the 27 countries updated experienced comparability challenges due to differences in geographical coverage, percentage of the population analysed, exclusion or inclusion of rural and urban populations or change of source/ methodology between 2019 and 2020 estimates.

Consensus

All partners are in agreement with the general magnitude and severity of acute food insecurity indicated for the countries included in this report, except Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia and Haiti. For these countries, FEWS NET analyses of available evidence suggest the population requiring emergency food assistance was lower than IPC estimates because of different interpretation of data related to factors contributing to acute food insecurity.

Figure 1
COVID-19 prevention measures introduce a new barrier to data collection

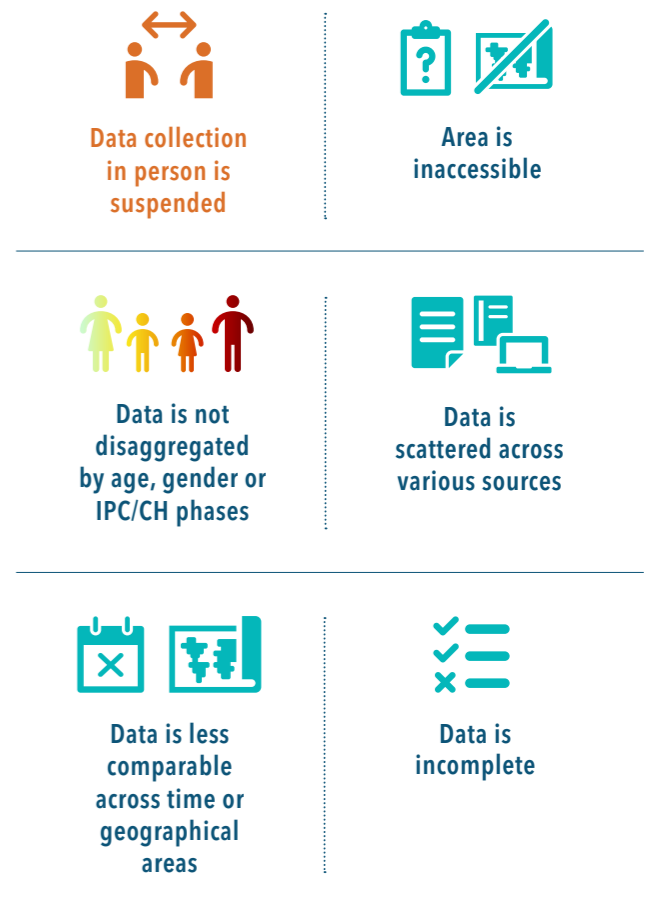


Figure 2

Adaptation of data analytics in times of COVID-19



The global impact of **COVID-19** on food security and nutrition



COVID-19 – an additional driver of multi-faceted food crises

The COVID-19 pandemic came at a time when acute food insecurity levels were already at record highs. By the end of September 2020, there were nearly 34 million cases and over 1 million deaths as a result of this unparalleled health crisis (WHO, September 2020).

The GRFC 2020 identified that in 2019, almost 135 million people in 55 countries and territories were acutely food insecure and in need of urgent food, livelihood and nutrition assistance largely as a result of conflict and insecurity, weather extremes, pest outbreaks, economic shocks or a combination of them (FSIN & GNAFC, April 2020).

The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2020 reported that almost 690 million people, or 8.9 percent of the global population, were chronically undernourished in 2019 – already an increase of 60 million people since 2014. In addition, 21.3 percent (144 million) of children under 5 years of age were stunted and 6.9 percent (47 million) wasted (FAO et al., July 2020). It also suggests that an additional 83–132 million people may be undernourished in 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

There can be little doubt that the acute food insecurity and nutrition situations are worsening in the 55 food-crisis countries and territories. In addition, some populations that until early 2020 had adequate food availability and access, have been pushed into acute food insecurity and are now in need of urgent, life-saving food and livelihoods assistance.

In June, the UN warned that without large-scale coordinated action, COVID-19 combined with the emerging global recession could create a global food emergency and disrupt the functioning of food systems, with consequences for health and nutrition 'of a severity and scale unseen for more than half a century' (UN, June 2020).

Six months since WHO's declaration of COVID-19 as a pandemic, the indirect socio-economic consequences of the battle to contain the spread of COVID-19 are aggravating the tenuous and fragile food security and nutrition situation for millions worldwide. The direct health impacts of COVID-19 are also negatively affecting poor households' food security because sick or quarantining people have limited ability to engage in productive activities and infected households may face increased expenditure on health, resulting in fewer resources to purchase food (FEWS NET, June 2020).

The pandemic containment measures could trigger unrest and undermine international crisis management systems (International Crisis Group, 2020). Areas with high levels of unemployment and socioeconomic grievances may provide fertile breeding grounds for non-state armed groups to recruit vulnerable people. The demands of the pandemic containment may divert international attention and resources away from conflict prevention and mediation, and travel restrictions may hinder face-to-face diplomatic efforts and peacekeeping operations (FAO & WFP, July 2020).

The pandemic containment measures also exacerbate pre-existing vulnerabilities and risks of violence and discrimination faced by migrants, asylum seekers and IDPs, which intersect with other factors, such as gender, age, disability, mental health and psychosocial needs, or pertaining to a minority. With more people falling below the poverty line, tensions between displaced people and host communities are likely to increase, especially in communities depending on humanitarian assistance (OCHA, May 2020).

While we still lack systematic information from direct observation to come to fully quantify the impacts, the analysis in the following pages explains the multiple channels through which the COVID-19 pandemic and containment measures are affecting food security and nutrition.

Figure 3

The COVID-19 crisis timeline, 2019–2020



Loss of income



Loss of income sources prevents vulnerable households from accessing the food they need to avert acute hunger and undernourishment.

In September 2020, governments were still enacting measures to curb the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. These measures consist largely of movement restrictions and social distancing that help limit the transmission of the virus, though they also limit access to income-earning opportunities for many populations.

Globally, the effects have been especially severe in the informal sector, which represents 90 percent of total employment in some low-income countries and 67 percent in middle-income countries. Globally informal workers lost an estimated 60 percent of their earnings in the month following the declaration of the pandemic. In Africa and Latin America this figure was nearly 80 percent (ILO, April 2020).

With many working in the informal sector – such as waste recyclers, street vendors and food servers, construction, transport and domestic workers (UN, April 2020) – the urban poor have been particularly affected by containment measures such as stay-at-home orders, closure of open markets and shutdowns (WFP/UN Habitat, August 2020). In low-income countries, a high proportion of them simply cannot survive without a daily wage and have no access to a social safety net.

Tourism is the backbone of many countries' economies and a lifeline for millions of workers, particularly women and in small island developing states (SIDS). The industry could lose at least USD 1.2 trillion, having been placed at a standstill for nearly four months (UNCTAD, July 2020).

As global brands and retailers cancelled orders from supplier factories and governments imposed restrictions on travel, many garment factories suspended production and either fired or temporarily suspended their workers. The industry employs 60 million workers around the world, nearly 75 percent of whom are women. Those who lose their jobs face months without pay to support themselves and their families, have few or no savings to fall back on and extremely limited options for generating income. Many schemes to support workers are inadequate (Care International, 2020).

Remittance flows from migrants into low-income and fragile states that are experiencing a macroeconomic shock represent a lifeline that insures families back home against income shocks, supporting and smoothing their consumption (IMF, June 2020). In 2019, 200 million migrant workers in over 40 countries were sending remittances to 800 million family members in more than 125 countries (UN, June 2020). Over 40 percent of these global remittances were sent to rural regions (FAO, April 2020). Remittances worldwide are expected to decrease by 20 percent in 2020 as migrant workers lose their employment in host countries (WB, April 2020).

Rural areas, home to 80 percent of the world's 734 million extreme poor before the COVID-19 crisis, were also poorly prepared to cope with the effects of the crisis on employment. Most of the extreme rural poor (an estimated 76 percent) work in agriculture – largely informal work that excludes them from access to employment-related social protection. Given that the rural poor have difficulty in accessing credit and risk management mechanisms, populations are left with little to no cushion to handle or surmount the crisis (FAO, April 2020).

Constrained government finances



The pandemic is expected to plunge most countries into recession in 2020, overstretching the capacities of many governments to protect vulnerable populations, especially in emerging and developing economies.

Despite greater constraints on government finances and forex earnings, many governments have expanded social protection programmes. The World Bank's June 2020 *Global Economic Prospects* envisions a 5.2 percent contraction in global GDP in 2020, the deepest global recession in decades. Advanced economies are projected to shrink by 7 percent and emerging market and developing economies by 2.5 percent as they cope with their own domestic outbreaks of the virus. This would represent the weakest showing by this group of economies in at least 60 years (WB, June 2020).

In June, the IMF projected global growth at -4.9 percent in 2020, 1.9 percentage points below its April 2020 *World Economic Outlook* forecast as the COVID-19 pandemic had a more negative impact on activity in the first half of 2020 than anticipated (IMF, June 2020).

The deep recessions are expected to leave lasting scars through lower investment, an erosion of human capital through lost work and schooling, and fragmentation of global trade and supply linkages (WB, June 2020). As contractions in global economic activities and demand depress trade and commodity prices, low- and middle-income countries that rely on the export of primary commodities, including crude oil, for foreign exchange revenue, are gravely affected. These include many of the GRFC's 55 food-crisis countries and territories,

other commodity-dependent economies¹ and SIDS, many of which also have falling tourism revenues and remittances.

The flow of foreign direct investments is expected to shrink by up to 40 percent in 2020, hitting developing economies hardest because they rely more on investment in global value chain and extractive industries, and because they are not able to put in place the same economic support measures as developed economies (UNCTAD, 2020).

Net food-importing countries face some of the greatest challenges in the context of the COVID-19 crisis chiefly because they depend on revenue and foreign exchange earnings from exports to procure goods on the international market. Faced with contractions in global economic activities and demand, these countries are experiencing large fiscal deficits and high levels of public debt (UN DESA, May 2020). With a significant portion of their public budgets devoted to servicing debt, they struggle to find the necessary resources

¹ The definition of 'commodity-dependent' is when commodities constitute the predominant share of a country's exports (UNCTAD).

to respond to the health and economic impacts of COVID-19 and protect the most vulnerable against destitution and acute food insecurity (FAO & WFP, July 2020). Currency depreciation makes it more expensive to service USD-denominated debt.

Even before the pandemic, debt in emerging and developing economies had risen faster over the last decade than at any time in the past 50 years, reaching more than 170 percent of GDP in 2019, a historic peak (WB, December 2019).

Unsustainable debt can lead to debt distress and even default (IMF, September 2020) aggravating the impact of the pandemic on food security by putting existing social protection schemes at risk just when they are most needed, while potentially leading to more job losses. The IMF and World Bank currently classify half of low-income economies in external debt distress or at high risk of it (WB, June 2020).

On 15 April, G20 countries agreed to a 'debt service standstill' until the end of 2020, from all official bilateral creditors, providing some direct liquidity support to the poorest countries (OECD, May 2020).

Deepening inequalities



COVID-19 is disrupting livelihoods everywhere, but the poorest are most affected, and it is potentially setting back fragile gains made towards gender equality.

As employment and income opportunities fall for the poor, the pandemic is widening the gap between rich and poor. Poor countries have lower economic capacities to compensate for declining incomes and it is in poor countries that food prices are most likely to rise even if global prices do not (IFPRI, April 2020).

Rising inequality along with other socioeconomic grievances, including increasing levels of unemployment (particularly among the youth), loss of income and livelihoods, increasing poverty, and acute food insecurity may deepen existing social discontent and fragmentation – especially in countries with pre-existing and compounding economic crises. Levels of civil unrest risk being higher and having more destabilizing effects compared to recent years (FAO & WFP, July 2020).

When incomes fall for poor households, expenditure on food and health services would likely be prioritised over investment in productive assets and activities, further deepening inequality.

Even before this global crisis, 53 percent of children in low- and middle-income countries were unable to read and understand a simple story by the end of primary school, rising to 80 percent in poor countries (WB, October 2019). As learning switches to remote platforms, this crisis is likely

to deepen the divide between those who can and those who cannot access them, widening the learning gap between rich and poor (Vegas E, April 2020). The combination of being out of school and the loss of family livelihoods caused by the pandemic may leave girls especially vulnerable, and exacerbate exclusion and inequality – particularly for persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups (WB, June 2020).

Women in particular face harsh economic consequences of the pandemic, as they are overrepresented in the sectors and jobs that are hardest hit, particularly in the most vulnerable types of employment with the least protection, such as self-employed, domestic workers, daily wage workers and contributing family workers (OCHA, May 2020).

As they take on greater care demands at home, their jobs are disproportionately affected by cuts and lay-offs. In many countries, the first round of layoffs has been particularly acute in the services sector, including retail, hospitality and tourism, where women are overrepresented. Such impacts risk rolling back the already fragile gains made in female labour force participation, limiting women's ability to support themselves and their families, especially for female-headed households (UN Women, April 2020).

Food systems



Disrupted trade and supply chains are resulting in localized food price increases and curtailing access to agricultural labour and inputs.

Agriculture and food sectors were generally declared as 'essential' activities, which, along with plentiful global food stocks and good harvests helped keep food supplies flowing, even in countries with strict social distancing requirements. Nonetheless, severe supply chain disruptions have emerged (FAO, September 2020).

By early July, export restrictions on staple foods including rice and wheat, imposed by 21 countries to protect domestic consumers in the early months of the pandemic, had been lifted in all but two countries (Laborde et al, July 2020), and by October all were lifted.

The expected global cereal output in 2020 stands at an all-time high and 58 million tonnes above 2019. In August 2020, the FAO Cereal Price Index was 7 percent above its August 2019 value with sorghum, barley, maize, and rice prices showing the biggest price gains (FAO, September 2020). Despite relatively stable international food prices, numerous countries are experiencing high levels of food price inflation on the domestic market due to the COVID-19 outbreak and containment effort measures (WB, September 2020).

The suspension of transport networks, border closures and blockages slowing the supply of goods and movement of people, and the closure of weekly and open-air markets in

many countries reduced regional trade and prevented farmers from selling their produce, sometimes leading to food losses, localized food scarcity and price spikes (FAO & WFP, July 2020).

Movement restrictions also affected agricultural input supply chains at critical times in the season. They reduced informal labourers' access to farmlands, wages, area of land cultivated and harvesting capacity, and they constrained transport of goods to processing facilities and/or markets. Immediate impacts tended to be more severe for fresh, perishable food leading to higher levels of food losses (FAO, May 2020).

Movement restrictions and border closures in Africa's drylands limited pastoralists' access to pasture and markets, affecting livestock supply chains, increasing intercommunity tensions, and dramatically affecting fragile transhumant livelihoods (OCHA, May 2020).

Labour shortages further disrupted the food chain, with many labourers returning from neighbouring countries or urban centres to their original homes in rural areas, awaiting the restrictions to be eased and the risk of infection to be minimized (FAO, May 2020).

Food producers faced losses of perishable, nutritious food as consumption patterns shifted towards cheaper staples, likely increasing micronutrient deficiencies among vulnerable populations. Supply disruptions and inflation affecting key agricultural inputs or labour shortages could diminish next season's crop production (WB, September 2020).

Increasing malnutrition levels



Lower access to nutritious foods and disruption of health and nutrition services increase risk of child malnutrition.

In April 2020, the *Global Report on Food Crises* reported that prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, an estimated 75 million children under 5 years of age were affected by stunting and 17 million were suffering from wasting in 55 countries and territories affected by a food crisis (FSIN & GNAFC, April 2020). In other words, they hosted just over half the global total of stunted children (144 million) and over a third of the global total of wasted children (47 million).

Vulnerable populations in these fragile contexts and beyond are facing increasingly limited access to nutritious foods and interruptions to essential health, nutrition and social protection services because of the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19, escalating the risk of all forms of malnutrition and jeopardizing the survival of young children in low-income and middle-income countries (*The Lancet*, July 2020).

Recent estimates on the impacts of COVID-19 on childhood malnutrition and nutrition-related mortality suggest that without timely action, the global prevalence of child wasting could rise by 14.3 percent, resulting in an additional 6.7 million children affected by wasting – 80 percent of them from sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. It estimates there could be more than 10 000 additional child deaths each month in the first 12 months of the pandemic. However, the report's authors also point out that these estimates are likely conservative, given that the duration of this crisis is unknown, and its full impacts on food, health and social protection systems are yet to be realized (*The Lancet*, July 2020).

The relationship between COVID-19 and malnutrition

As people's incomes and savings are eroded, highly nutritious foods, such as fruit, vegetables and protein-rich products, are often replaced with cheaper foods, such as those derived from staple cereals. This shift limits declines in calorie intake but

increases micronutrient deficiencies. Additionally, COVID-19 containment actions can create greater disruptions in the supply of fruits, vegetables, milk and meat products, and fewer in the supply of staple foods, reinforcing the income-related reduction in consumption of these foods, especially by poor households (Laborde et al, July 2020).

For many children, a school meal may be their only nutritious food of the day. School closures to limit the spread of the virus resulted in 370 million school-age children across 143 countries missing out on school meals by late May 2020 (WFP, 2020).

In some countries, such as Côte d'Ivoire and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, rumours, mistrust and stigma surrounding COVID-19 are reportedly playing a role in stopping families from using health services. Breastfeeding may also be negatively affected by misinformation about the risk associated with COVID-19 despite clear WHO guidance (OCHA, July 2020). By August 2020, 29.2 million caregivers of children under 2 years old were reached with messages on promotion of breastfeeding and healthy diets for young children (UNICEF, August 2020).

Pregnant and lactating women, women of reproductive age and adolescent girls have increased nutritional needs that might not be met as a result of their increasing vulnerability in times of COVID-19 (OCHA, July 2020).

Even before the pandemic, an increase of vaccine preventable diseases had been observed. The disruption of immunization services – as a result of suspended campaigns/clinics or

cancelled shipments – is increasing the risk of vaccine-preventable disease outbreaks, while overburdened health services and fear of using them are intensifying the vicious cycle of disease and malnutrition (OCHA, July 2020). Some 80 million children in at least 68 countries may be at risk of diphtheria, measles and polio due to recent disruptions in supply chains and immunization services. An estimated 250 million children are missing the benefits of vitamin A supplementation – vital for strengthening children's immune systems – due to pandemic containment measures (UNICEF, July 2020).

During the early months of the pandemic there was a 30 percent reduction in the coverage of essential – and often life-saving – nutrition services, according to UNICEF reports. Mobility restrictions, closure of facilities and fear of infection are the key reasons cited for caregivers not accessing health and nutrition facilities. Outreach and mass screening services aimed at early detection and treatment of acute malnutrition were constrained. Despite the constricted access to services, 3.8 million children were reached with treatment for severe acute malnutrition (UNICEF, July and August 2020).

However, highly vulnerable, hard-to-reach populations and IDPs in camps faced reduced critical services due to the cancellation of rapid response missions (UNICEF, February–July 2020). Domestic and international travel restrictions, interruptions in refugee resettlement processes and lack of personal protective equipment (PPE) severely compromised access to preventative and curative health care for migrants and refugees (OCHA, July 2020).

Humanitarian assistance challenges



Funding shortfalls, mobility and access constraints, supply chain delays, and threats to humanitarian workers are directly affecting crisis-affected populations from receiving the assistance they urgently need.

The cost of delivering planned humanitarian assistance is inflated by increasing costs of goods and services, including logistics costs, and by access constraints (OCHA, May 2020).

Travel restrictions have had a tangible impact on the ability of people in need to access services and humanitarian assistance. Social distancing has disrupted access to basic health services and stalled vaccination campaigns (ACAPS, July 2020).

Lockdowns, curfews and checkpoints have also posed severe challenges to humanitarian responders' access to people in need. In Libya, for instance, humanitarian workers needed to obtain special passes to allow movement during 24-hour long curfews, which affected operations (OCHA, April 2020). In El Salvador, quarantine restrictions added to delays in food aid deliveries, particularly in rural areas (OCHA, June 2020).

Measures such as quarantine and testing requirements upon entry into countries or specific regions sometimes hindered the ability of humanitarian personnel to travel between countries or regions. In Vanuatu, the humanitarian response to Cyclone Harold in April was delayed by restrictions on international aid workers (ACAPS, July 2020).

Despite challenges, humanitarian actors have adapted and ramped up the provision of essential needs assistance to the most affected people, in coordination with and support of governments' own efforts (OCHA, July 2020).

According to an April–May survey among 28 Development Assistance Committee (DAC) members and 15 non-DAC countries, a common trend among provider countries is a re-orientation of development budgets towards COVID-19-related health and socio-economic efforts. Certain countries also reported additional funding for COVID-19 response (OECD, September 2020).



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Displacement in the context of COVID-19

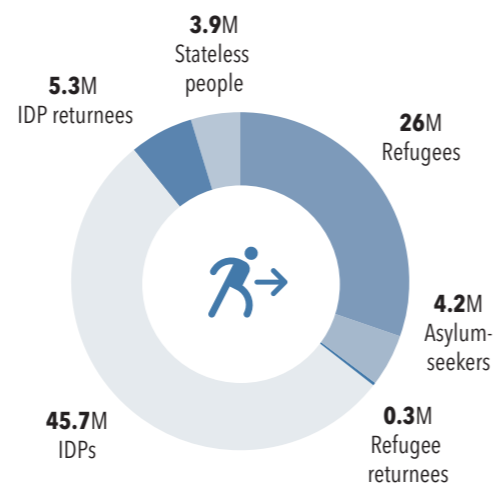
By the end of 2019, an unparalleled 79.5 million people – one percent of the world’s population – were forcibly displaced by conflict, violence and persecution (see figure 4). In addition to an estimated 11 million newly displaced people and the inclusion of 3.6 million displaced Venezuelans abroad, millions were unable to return to their country of origin because of ongoing conflict (UNHCR, July 2020).

Pre-COVID-19, the top 10 countries of origin for international displacement situations were already major food crisis countries, with the highest number of displaced people coming from the Syrian Arab Republic (see figure 5).

For the forcibly displaced, COVID-19 has exacerbated the threat to food security, health and socio-economic inclusion. The barriers to economic inclusion they typically face, such as restrictions on movement, a lack of access to social safety nets and limited employment, have been exacerbated by the pandemic, resulting in the use of negative coping strategies (UNHCR, August 2020). In some cases, the forcibly displaced have had to make a decision: risk exposure to the virus or cope with a loss of income and livelihoods.

In Africa and the Middle East, over 350 000 refugees have asked for urgent financial assistance to cover essential

Figure 4
Numbers of displaced people, end of 2019



Source: UNHCR, July 2020.

Returnee refugees are former refugees who have returned between January and December 2019 to their countries of origin, either spontaneously or in an organized fashion, but are yet to be fully integrated, as defined in *Global Trends Forced Displacement in 2019*.

Returnee IDPs refers to those IDPs who were beneficiaries of UNHCR’s protection and assistance activities, and who returned to their areas of origin or habitual residence between January and December 2019.

needs (UNHCR, August 2020). In the eastern Horn of Africa, COVID-19 comes on top of existing emergency conditions in the region, where 72 percent of refugees are experiencing food ration cuts due to underfunding (UNHCR, September 2020). Meanwhile, increases in child labour, early or forced marriage and recruitment of children into armed groups have been documented in several countries including Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Mali and the Syrian Arab Republic (UNHCR, August 2020).

The COVID-19 related restrictions that countries have adopted have also significantly slowed down economic activity and have disproportionately impacted the informal sector. In Rwanda, most of the 12 000 urban refugees reported job losses (UNHCR, 2020). In Jordan, the average monthly wages of Jordanian and Syrian workers fell by more than 40 percent in March, due to a drop in working hours and dismissal of some workers (ILO, May 2020). In Lebanon, over half of the refugees surveyed by UNHCR reported having lost their already-meagre livelihoods, and 70 percent reported that they had to skip meals (UN, June 2020).

Social distancing measures are difficult to practice in refugee camps and settlements, which are often densely populated and overcrowded. Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya has a population density about 1 000 times that of the host Turkana community (UN, June 2020).

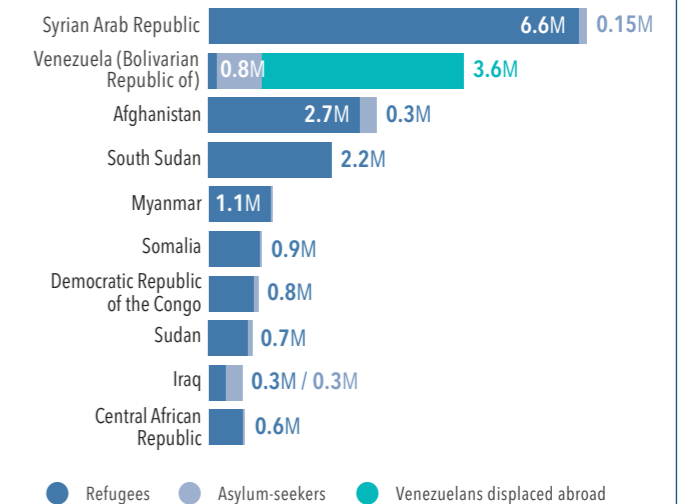
COVID-19 is also emerging as a new cause of internal displacement. Over 10 000 people are documented to be on the move in Yemen due to fears of infection, impacts on public services and deteriorating economic prospects, while increased returns are being seen in Zimbabwe and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) (Global Protection Cluster, August 2020).

Some countries have adopted border restrictions to curb the spread of the pandemic (see figure 6). This has resulted in a drop in both applications for asylum and in numbers of registration of internally displaced, and may signal an underrepresentation of the actual number of people seeking protection measures during COVID-19 (UNHCR, May 2020).

COVID-19 is limiting displaced populations’ access to and utilization of malnutrition treatment and other nutrition programmes. The restrictions on movement and lack of PPE have made people reluctant to access services, while the disruption to international supply chains has reduced the availability of medicines and supplies.

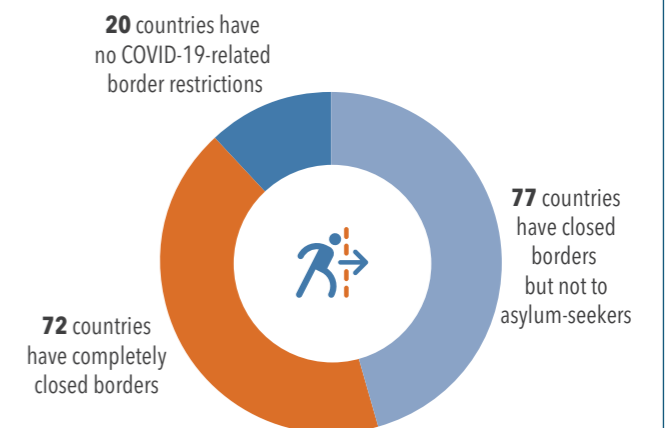
Since the onset of COVID-19, the trends in admissions into malnutrition treatment programmes have been mixed. Admissions for outpatient treatment in East Africa in all refugee camps and settlements, except one, were 25–68

Figure 5
Top international displacement situations by country of origin, end of 2019



Source: UNHCR, Global Trends 2019.

Figure 6
Asylum-seekers and border closures, September 2020



Source: UNHCR, COVID platform accessed 18 September 2020.

percent lower in March–July 2020 than in the same months in 2019. This is likely due to the suspension of community screening activities and the vitamin A campaign, and fear of infection at health facilities. However, admissions slightly increased elsewhere. In Baga Sola, Chad, this was due to the influx of refugees and the active promotion of screening by caregivers using MUAC (UNHCR, 2020).

While COVID-19 preventive measures and consequent adaptations have likely affected the numbers of children admitted, it is difficult to interpret the situation based solely on admissions data.

2019-2020 Global overview of acute food insecurity estimates



Global overview of acute food insecurity estimates in times of COVID-19



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The GRFC 2020 reported that in 2019, 135 million people in 55 countries/territories were in need of urgent food, livelihood and nutrition assistance at the peak point in the year.

This GRFC 2020 September update finds that a range of 101–104.6 million people in 27 countries are classified in Crisis or worse (IPC/CH Phase 3 or above) according to analyses carried out between March and September 2020, reflecting the peak situation in times of COVID-19 in countries for which analyses had been released by 30 September. See table 1b.

Although there are comparability challenges (see limitations section), when looking at the same 27 countries,¹ around 97.6 million people were classified in Crisis or worse (IPC/CH Phase 3 or above) in 2019. See table 1a.

In 20 out of these 27 countries, the GRFC September 2020 update finds that an additional 130.5 million people are classified in Stressed (IPC/CH Phase 2) according to analyses carried out between March and September 2020.²

¹ Analysis for Togo was not reported in the GRFC 2020.

² Countries for which FEWS NET provided the estimates – El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Rwanda, South Sudan, Uganda and Zimbabwe – do not have data for the numbers of people classified in Stressed (IPC Phase 2).

Many other countries beyond these 27 are facing high levels of acute food insecurity in times of COVID-19 but did not have updated analyses available. Nineteen countries only had estimates and forecasts for 2020 produced before accounting for the impacts of COVID-19. In these countries, 15.9 million people are classified in Crisis or worse (IPC/CH Phase 3 or above). In 17 of those countries, 39.5 million people are classified in Stressed (IPC/CH Phase 2). See table 1a.

It is difficult to distinguish which of the main underlying shocks and stressors are the most dominant drivers of this apparently worsening situation. Throughout 2020, conflict has continued to drive displacement and rob people of their livelihoods, while currency devaluation and escalating food prices have curtailed food access, and flooding, dry spells and desert locusts have threatened food availability.

Evidence from the food security analyses in this report shows that the pandemic has had a compounding effect on these pre-existing and ongoing drivers mainly through the pathway of declining economic activity related to COVID-19 restrictive measures, leading to income losses and reduced household purchasing power.

In urban areas, the measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 constituted a rapid onset shock to people's livelihoods. In rural areas, the effects did not manifest as a sudden shock but rather as a slow onset disaster whose impacts are likely to materialise during the coming agricultural seasons, depending on disruptions to supply chains and food systems.

Update on the world's worst food crises

Of the 10 worst food crises identified in the GRFC 2020, eight – Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Haiti, Nigeria (16 states and FCT), South Sudan, the Sudan and Yemen – have updated IPC/CH analyses based on data collected since the declaration of the COVID-19 pandemic. In these countries, around 74 million people were classified in Crisis or worse (IPC/CH Phase 3 or above).^{3,4} All eight had populations in Emergency (IPC/CH Phase 4) and, with the exception of Ethiopia, at least one area classified in Emergency (IPC/CH Phase 4). Updates for the Syrian Arab Republic and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) were pending at the time of publication.

Across Haiti, Nigeria (16 states and FCT) and South Sudan an additional 5 million people were in Crisis or worse (IPC/CH Phase 3 or above) in times of COVID-19 compared to the 2019 peak. For Yemen, it is impossible to make a direct comparison between the 2019 peak figure and that of mid-2020. While the 2019 peak figure referred to the entire country, that of July 2020 covered only southern districts, where there was a 0.5 million decrease in the numbers facing Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above).

The Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia and the Sudan analyses included new areas in 2020, increasing the population analysed and making year-on-year comparisons impossible. For instance, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the number rose from the 2019 peak of 15.6 million to close to 22 million people in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) from July–December 2020, but the analysis covered additional territories including populated urban centres where informal work opportunities have been hit by COVID-19 containment measures.

Although the numbers for the Sudan are not directly comparable because of the inclusion of West Darfur, when comparing the same areas, an additional 2.5 million people were in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above). According to the analysis covering the entire country, 9.6 million people were acutely food-insecure and in need of urgent assistance in mid-2020, a record number for the Sudan.

³ The Yemen analysis only covered part of the country. According to the pre-COVID analysis, the number of acutely food-insecure people in Yemen was expected to exceed 17 million in 2020 (GRFC 2020).

⁴ FEWS NET's analyses suggest that the population requiring emergency food assistance was lower than the IPC estimates for Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia and Haiti.

Neither are the analyses for Afghanistan directly comparable since the 2019 peak figure referred to November 2019–March 2020 lean season, while the latest IPC analysis was carried out in the early weeks of the pandemic but likely before its full economic impact was felt. With 10.9 million people in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) in April–May 2020, the analysis shows a slight decrease in absolute terms by comparison with the 2019 peak. This may reflect recovery from the impacts of the 2018 drought and relatively better food availability at the start of the harvest. However, it must be noted that acute food insecurity was still alarming especially in urban areas with both Hirat and Kandahar classified in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) and seven other cities in Crisis (IPC Phase 3), including the capital Kabul. The number of people in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) has also increased by almost 800 000 people between the 2019 peak and April–May 2020. The situation requires careful monitoring.

Acute food insecurity in other food-crisis countries

In addition to Afghanistan, Haiti, Nigeria (16 states and FCT) and South Sudan, seven other major food crisis countries as flagged in the GRFC 2020 (Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, Honduras, Lesotho, Somalia, Uganda and Zimbabwe) have in times of COVID-19 data that is comparable with the peak of 2019. All have seen an increase in the numbers of acutely food-insecure people in need of urgent assistance.

Burkina Faso registered the biggest increase with the number almost trebling to 3.4 million compared with the 2019 peak situation. The country also has 11 000 people facing Catastrophe (CH Phase 5).

In Zimbabwe, an estimated 5–6 million people are expected to be in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above).

Togo, whose analysis was triggered by the negative impacts of COVID-19 containment measures, was included for the first time.

More analyses are ongoing

Careful and continuous monitoring is required to assess the evolution of food crises in the context of the pandemic and to understand its impact on historically vulnerable and newly vulnerable population groups. This will provide critical evidence needed to inform policy and programming responses to food crises as they evolve.

At the time of publication of this report, food security analyses for several countries were still pending and for some of the countries covered in this September update the peak of acute insecurity may yet occur during the October–December 2020 period. All updated analyses will be included in the GRFC 2021, to be released early next year, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of the magnitude and severity of food crises at the peak point during 2020.

Table 1a

Highest number of acutely food-insecure people in 2019 and 2020, pre-COVID-19

Countries	Source	Highest number of acutely food-insecure people in 2019 estimated pre-COVID-19					Highest number of acutely food-insecure people in 2020 estimated pre-COVID-19				
		Time period covered	Population of reference (millions) Percentage of population analysed	Population in IPC/CH Phase 2 (millions) Percentage of population analysed in IPC/CH Phase 2	Population in IPC/CH Phase 3 or above (millions) Percentage of population analysed in IPC/CH Phase 3 or above	Highest area phase classification	Time period covered	Population of reference (millions) Percentage of population analysed	Population in IPC/CH Phase 2 (millions) Percentage of population analysed in IPC/CH Phase 2	Population in IPC/CH Phase 3 or above (millions) Percentage of population analysed in IPC/CH Phase 3 or above	Highest area phase classification
Afghanistan ¹	IPC	Nov 2019-Mar 2020	32.2 95%	9.5 31%	11.3 37%	Phase 4 Emergency	Jan-Apr 2020	32.2 95%	9.5 31%	11.3 37%	Phase 4 Emergency
Angola (24 communes in 3 provinces)	IPC	Oct 2019-Feb 2020	31.8 3%	0.2 21%	0.6 62%	Phase 4 Emergency	Jan-Feb 2020	31.8 3%	0.2 21%	0.6 62%	Phase 4 Emergency
Bangladesh (Cox's Bazar and host populations)	WFP	Nov-Dec 2019	3.5 100%	N/A N/A	1.3 37%	N/A					
Burkina Faso	CH	Oct-Dec 2019	21.4 100%	3.6 17%	1.2 6%	Phase 3 Crisis	Jun-Aug 2020	21.4 100%	5.2 24%	2.2 10%	Phase 3 Crisis
Burundi	FEWS NET	Mar-Apr 2019	11.5 100%	N/A N/A	0.2 2%	Phase 1 Minimal	Apr-May 2020	11.5 100%	N/A N/A	0.15-0.35	Phase 2 Stressed
Cabo Verde	CH	Oct-Dec 2019	0.6 86%	0.06 13%	0.01 2%	Phase 2 Stressed	Jun-Aug 2020		0.1 14%	0.01 2%	Phase 2 Stressed
Cameroon ²	CH	Oct-Dec 2019	25.0 64%	3.8 24%	1.4 8%	Phase 3 Crisis	Mar-May 2020		7.5 30%	2.7 11%	Phase 3 Crisis
Central African Republic ²	IPC	May-Aug 2019	4.8 91%	1.8 41%	1.8 41%	Phase 4 Emergency	May-Aug 2020	4.8 95%	1.6 35%	2.1 47%	Phase 4 Emergency
Chad	CH	Jun-Aug 2019	15.8 91%	2.7 19%	0.6 4%	Phase 3 Crisis	Jun-Aug 2020		3.1 21%	1.0 7%	Phase 3 Crisis
Colombia (Venezuelan migrants)	WFP	Sep-Dec 2019	1.6 100%	0.7 41%	0.9 55%	N/A					
Côte d'Ivoire ²	CH	Jun-Aug 2019	25.5 77%	2.6 13%	0.06 0%	Phase 2 Stressed	Mar-May 2020		0.9 15%	0.2 4%	Phase 2 Stressed
Democratic Republic of the Congo ^{1,2}	IPC	Jul-Dec 2019	86.8 69%	27.0 45%	15.6 26%	Phase 4 Emergency	Jan-May 2020	86.8 55%	21.0 44%	13.6 28%	Phase 4 Emergency
Djibouti	WFP	N/A	N/A N/A	N/A N/A	N/A N/A	N/A N/A	Jan 2020	1.1 69%		0.2 25%	N/A
Ecuador (Venezuelan migrants)	WFP	Jan-Mar 2019	0.4 100%	0.1 24%	0.3 0.76%	N/A					
El Salvador ²	IPC ³	Apr-Jul 2019	6.4 22%	0.5 34%	0.3 22%	Phase 3 Crisis	May-Aug 2020	100%	N/A N/A	<0.1	Phase 2 Stressed
Eswatini (rural)	IPC	Oct 2019-Mar 2020	1.4 67%	0.4 39%	0.2 25%	Phase 3 Crisis	Jan-Mar 2020	1.4 67%	0.4 39%	0.2 25%	Phase 3 Crisis
Ethiopia ¹ (selected areas in 6 regions)	IPC	Jul-Sep 2019	112.1 26%	10.0 34%	8.0 27%	Phase 3 Crisis	Feb-Jun 2020	112.1 26%	10.3 35%	8.5 28%	Phase 3 Crisis
Gambia ²	CH	Oct-Dec 2019	2.2 89%	0.4 23%	0.2 10%	Phase 2 Stressed	Jun-Aug 2020		0.6 23%	0.1 6%	Phase 2 Stressed
Guatemala ²	IPC	Mar-Jun 2019	17.6 95%	4.8 29%	3.1 18%	Phase 3 Crisis	Apr-Jul 2020	17.6 39%	2.5 36%	1.3 19%	Phase 3 Crisis
Guinea	CH	Jun-Aug 2019	13.4 75%	1.4 14%	0.3 3%	Phase 2 Stressed	Jun-Aug 2020		1.4 14%	0.3 3%	Phase 2 Stressed
Guinea-Bissau	CH	Oct-Dec 2019	2.0 63%	0.3 26%	0.1 10%	Phase 3 Crisis	Jun-Aug 2020		0.3 24%	0.1 5%	Phase 2 Stressed
Haiti ¹	IPC	Oct 2019-Feb 2020	11.3 93%	3.2 31%	3.7 35%	Phase 4 Emergency	Mar-Jun 2020	11.3 93%	2.8 27%	4.1 40%	Phase 4 Emergency
Honduras (13 departments)	IPC	Nov 2019-Feb 2020	9.7 53%	1.8 35%	1.0 18%	Phase 3 Crisis	Mar-Jun 2020	9.7 53%	1.8 36%	1.2 24%	Phase 3 Crisis
Iraq	HNO	Nov 2019	39.3 100%	N/A N/A	1.8 5%	N/A					

¹ FEWS NET's analysis of available evidence suggests the population requiring emergency food assistance in 2019 is lower than the IPC estimate.

² The geographical or population coverage of estimates vary widely between 2019 and 2020 pre-COVID-19. Direct comparison cannot be made.

³ The data source for pre-COVID 2020 is FEWS NET.

Table 1b

Highest number of acutely food-insecure people in 2020, in times of COVID-19

Countries	Source	Highest number of acutely food-insecure people in 2020 estimated in times of COVID-19					Change in numbers of people in IPC/CH Phase 3 or above between 2019 peak estimates and 2020 estimates in times of COVID-19
		Time period covered	Population of reference (millions) Percentage of population analysed	Population in IPC/CH Phase 2 (millions) Percentage of population analysed in IPC/CH Phase 2	Population in IPC/CH Phase 3 or above (millions) Percentage of population analysed in IPC/CH Phase 3 or above	Highest area phase classification	
Afghanistan ¹	IPC	Apr-May 2020	32.2 95%	10.9 35%	10.9 35%	Phase 4 Emergency	Not directly comparable due to change in analysis period. Decrease by 0.43 million people in absolute terms and decrease by 2 percentage points in prevalence.
Angola							
Bangladesh							
Burkina Faso	CH	Jun-Aug 2020	21.4 100%	5.3 20%	3.4 16%	Phase 4 Emergency	Increase by 2.16 million people in absolute terms and increase by 10 percentage points in prevalence.
Burundi	IPC	May 2020	11.9 92%	3.9 36%	1.4 13%	Phase 2 Stressed	Not directly comparable due to change in data source for analyses.
Cabo Verde							
Cameroon							
Central African Republic	IPC	May-Aug 2020	4.8 95%	1.6 35%	2.4 51%	Phase 4 Emergency	Increase by 0.55 million people in absolute terms and increase by 10 percentage points in prevalence.
Chad							
Colombia (Venezuelan migrants)							
Côte d'Ivoire							
Democratic Republic of the Congo ^{1,2}	IPC	Jul-Dec 2020	89.6 74%	29.0 44%	21.8 33%	Phase 4 Emergency	Not directly comparable due to an increase in the total population analysed (9 additional urban centres and 29 new territories). Increase by 6.2 million people in absolute terms and by 7 percentage points in prevalence.
Djibouti							
Ecuador (Venezuelan migrants)							
El Salvador	FEWS NET	May-Aug 2020	6.4 100%	N/A N/A	0.25-0.5 4-8%	Phase 3 Crisis	Increase by 0.4 million people and 6.2 percentage points in prevalence, five times compared to May-Aug 2019.
Eswatini	IPC	Oct 2020-Mar 2021	1.2 97%	0.38 34%	0.37 32%	Phase 3 Crisis	Not directly comparable due to an increase in the total population analysed (new inclusion of urban areas). Increase by 0.13 million people in absolute terms and by 7 percentage points in prevalence.
Ethiopia ¹ (selected areas in 7 regions)	IPC	Jul-Sep 2020	115.0 36%	13.0 32%	8.5 21%	Phase 3 Crisis	Not directly comparable due to an increase in the total population analysed. Increase by 0.5 million people in absolute terms and a decrease by 7 percentage points in prevalence.
Gambia							
Guatemala	FEWS NET	Jul-Sep 2020	17.6 100%	N/A N/A	2.0-2.5 11-14%	Phase 3 Crisis	
Guinea							
Guinea-Bissau							
Haiti ¹	IPC	Aug 2020-Feb 2021	10.9 87%	3.0 32%	4.0 42%	Phase 4 Emergency	Increase by 0.32 million people in absolute terms and by 7 percentage points in prevalence.
Honduras (13 departments)	IPC	Jun-Aug 2020	9.9 52%	1.9 37%	1.65 32%	Phase 3 Crisis	Increase by 0.68 million people in absolute terms and by 14 percentage points in prevalence.
Iraq							

¹ FEWS NET's analysis of available evidence suggests the population requiring emergency food assistance in 2019 is lower than the IPC estimate.

² The analyses covered 23 out of 26 provinces, including 85 out of 145 territories, 9 urban centres (Goma, Bukavu, Beni, Butembo, Mbuji-Mayi, Kananga, Kalemie, Zongo, Gbadolite) and 9 out of 25 'communes' in Kinshasa.

Table 1a cont'd.

Highest number of acutely food-insecure people in 2019 and 2020, pre-COVID-19

Countries	Source	Highest number of acutely food-insecure people in 2019 estimated pre-COVID-19					Highest number of acutely food-insecure people in 2020 estimated pre-COVID-19				
		Time period covered	Population of reference (millions) Percentage of population analysed	Population in IPC/CH Phase 2 (millions) Percentage of population analysed in IPC/CH Phase 2	Population in IPC/CH Phase 3 or above (millions) Percentage of population analysed in IPC/CH Phase 3 or above	Highest area phase classification	Time period covered	Population of reference (millions) Percentage of population analysed	Population in IPC/CH Phase 2 (millions) Percentage of population analysed in IPC/CH Phase 2	Population in IPC/CH Phase 3 or above (millions) Percentage of population analysed in IPC/CH Phase 3 or above	Highest area phase classification
Kenya (rural population)	IPC	Aug-Oct 2019	52.6 26%	6.0 43%	3.1 23%	Phase 3 Crisis	Jan-Mar 2020	53.8 28%	3.7 25%	1.3 9%	Phase 2 Stressed
Lebanon (Syrian refugees)	WFP	Apr-May 2019	0.9 100%	0.6 63%	0.3 29%	N/A					
Lesotho (rural population)	IPC	Oct 2019-Mar 2020	2.3 63%	0.6 38%	0.43 30%	Phase 3 Crisis	Jan-Mar 2020	2.3 63%	0.6 38%	0.43 30%	Phase 3 Crisis
Liberia	CH	Jun-Aug 2019	5.0 87%	0.8 19%	0.04 1%	Phase 2 Stressed	Oct-Dec 2020	N/A N/A	N/A N/A	N/A N/A	N/A
Libya	HNO	Dec 2019	6.7 100%	N/A N/A	0.3 5%						
Madagascar	IPC	Nov 2018-Mar 2019	24.3 19%	1.3 29%	1.3 28%	Phase 4 Emergency	Jan-Mar 2020	27.0 13%	1.3 38%	0.7 20%	Phase 3 Crisis
Malawi	IPC	Oct 2018-Mar 2019	18.1 84%	5.0 33%	3.3 22%	Phase 3 Crisis	Jan-Mar 2020	18.8 78%	4.3 29%	1.9 13%	Phase 3 Crisis
Mali	CH	Oct-Dec 2019	20.5 100%	2.9 14%	0.6 3%	Phase 3 Crisis	Jun-Aug 2020		3.7 18%	1.3 7%	Phase 3 Crisis
Mauritania	CH	Jun-Aug 2019	4.7 87%	1.2 28%	0.6 15%	Phase 2 Stressed	Jun-Aug 2020		0.8 19%	0.6 15%	Phase 3 Crisis
Mozambique (39 districts)	IPC	Oct 2019-Feb 2020	27.9 18%	1.6 32%	1.7 34%	Phase 3 Crisis	Jan-Mar 2020	27.9 18%	1.6 32%	1.7 34%	Phase 3 Crisis
Myanmar	HNO	Dec 2019	54.0 100%	0.02 0%	0.7 1%	N/A					
Namibia	IPC	Oct 2019-Mar 2020	2.5 97%	0.8 35%	0.4 18%	Phase 3 Crisis	Jan-Mar 2020	2.5 97%	0.8 35%	0.4 18%	Phase 3 Crisis
Nicaragua	FEWS NET	Jul-Sep 2019	6.0 100%	N/A N/A	0.1 1%	Phase 2 Stressed	May-Aug 2020	6.0 100%	N/A N/A	0.07-0.11 <1%	Phase 2 Stressed
Niger	CH	Oct-Dec 2019	21.8 100%	4.5 20%	1.4 7%	Phase 3 Crisis	Jun-Aug 2020		5.0 23%	2.0 9%	Phase 3 Crisis
Nigeria (16 states and Federal Capital Territory)	CH	Jun-Aug 2019	201.0 51%	18.8 18%	5.0 5%	Phase 4 Emergency	Jun-Aug 2020	206.1 50%	19.2 19%	7.1 7%	Phase 4 Emergency
Pakistan ² (Balochistan and Sindh drought-affected districts, 2019/former FAITA, 2020)	IPC	Oct 2018-Jul 2019	216.6 3%	1.4 23%	3.1 51%	Phase 4 Emergency	Jun-Aug 2020	220.9 2%	1.5 29%	1.2 25%	Phase 3 Crisis
Palestine	HNO	Dec 2019	5.0 100%	0.8 17%	1.7 33%	N/A					
Rwanda	FEWS NET	Apr-May 2019	12.6 100%	N/A N/A	0.1 1%	Phase 1 Minimal	Apr-May 2020	12.6 100%	N/A N/A	0.085-0.125 <1%	Phase 2 Stressed
Senegal ²	CH	Oct-Dec 2019	16.2 81%	1.8 14%	0.4 3%	Phase 2 Stressed	Jun-Aug 2020		3.5 21%	0.8 5%	Phase 3 Crisis
Sierra Leone	CH	Oct-Dec 2019	8.1 100%	2.6 33%	0.3 4%	Phase 2 Stressed	Jun-Aug 2020		4.0 49%	1.3 16%	Phase 3 Crisis
Somalia	IPC	Oct-Dec 2019	12.3 100%	4.2 34%	2.1 17%	Phase 4 Emergency	Apr-Jun 2020	12.3 100%	2.8 23%	1.3 11%	Phase 3 Crisis
South Sudan	IPC	May-Jul 2019	11.4 100%	3.2 28%	7.0 61%	Phase 4 Emergency	May-Jul 2020	11.7 100%	3.3 28%	6.5 55%	Phase 4 Emergency
Sudan ²	IPC ³	Jun-Aug 2019	42.8 98%	11.8 28%	5.9 14%	Phase 4 Emergency	Jun-Sep 2020	45.3 100%	N/A N/A	5.0-6.0	Phase 4 Emergency

² The geographical or population coverage of estimates vary widely between 2019 and 2020 pre-COVID-19. Direct comparison cannot be made.
³ The data source for pre-COVID 2020 is FEWS NET.

Table 1b cont'd.

Highest number of acutely food-insecure people in 2020, in times of COVID-19

Countries	Source	Highest number of acutely food-insecure people in 2020 estimated in times of COVID-19					Change in numbers of people in IPC/CH Phase 3 or above between 2019 peak estimates and 2020 estimates in times of COVID-19
		Time period covered	Population of reference (millions) Percentage of population analysed	Population in IPC/CH Phase 2 (millions) Percentage of population analysed in IPC/CH Phase 2	Population in IPC/CH Phase 3 or above (millions) Percentage of population analysed in IPC/CH Phase 3 or above	Highest area phase classification	
Kenya (rural population)	IPC	Oct-Dec 2020	53.8 29%	5.37 35%	0.85 6%	Phase 2 Stressed	Decrease by 2.2 million in absolute terms and by 17 percentage points in prevalence compared to the 2019 peak.
Lebanon							
Lesotho (rural population)	IPC	Oct 2020-Mar 2021	2.0 73%	0.48 33%	0.58 40%	Phase 3 Crisis	Increase by 0.15 million people in absolute terms and by 10 percentage points in prevalence.
Liberia							
Libya							
Madagascar	IPC	Apr-Jul 2020	27.7 8%	1.0 46%	0.55 24%	Phase 3 Crisis	Not directly comparable - decrease by 0.75 million people in absolute terms and decrease by 4 percentage points in prevalence.
Malawi	IPC	Oct 2020-Mar 2021	19.1 92%	6.2 35%	2.6 15%	Phase 3 Crisis	Not directly comparable due to an increase in the total population analysed (inclusion of 4 urban centres). Decrease by 0.7 million in absolute terms and by 7 percentage points in prevalence.
Mali							
Mauritania							
Mozambique ¹ (Maputo, Matola, Cabo Delgado, Tete)	IPC	Jun-Nov 2020	31.26 11%	1.1 32%	0.65 18%	Phase 3 Crisis	Not directly comparable due to decrease in population analysed and difference in geographical coverage (urban areas added, rural areas reduced/different).
Myanmar							
Namibia	IPC	Oct 2020-Mar 2021	2.5 89%	0.65 29%	0.44 20%	Phase 3 Crisis	Increase by 0.01 million in absolute terms or by 2 percentage points in prevalence.
Nicaragua	FEWS NET	Aug-Oct 2020	6.0 100%	N/A N/A	0.25-0.50 ≈5%	Phase 2 Stressed	Increase by 0.14-0.4 million people in absolute terms and roughly 4 percentage points in prevalence.
Niger							
Nigeria (16 states and Federal Capital Territory)	CH	Jun-Aug 2020	206.1 52%	23.4 22%	8.7 8%	Phase 4 Emergency	Increase by 3.65 million people in absolute terms and by 3 percentage points in prevalence.
Pakistan							
Palestine							
Rwanda	FEWS NET	Jun-Sep 2020	12.6 100%	N/A N/A	0.1-0.25 1%	Phase 2 Stressed	Increase by approximately 0.1 million people in absolute terms and roughly 1 percentage point in prevalence.
Senegal							
Sierra Leone							
Somalia	IPC	Oct-Dec 2020	12.3 78%	3.0	2.1 13%	Phase 3 Crisis	
South Sudan	FEWS NET	Feb-Aug 2020	11.7 100%	N/A N/A	7.0-8.0 64%	Phase 4 Emergency	Increase by up to 1 million in absolute terms compared to May-June 2019 IPC, and roughly 3 percentage points in prevalence.
Sudan	IPC	Jun-Sep 2020	45.3 100%	15.9 35%	9.6 21%	Phase 4 Emergency	Not directly comparable due to an increase in the population analysed (inclusion of West Darfur). Increase by 3.73 million people in absolute terms and by 7 percentage points in prevalence. When comparing the same areas, the increase is by 2.5 million people.

¹ Maputo and Matola, 2 districts in Cabo Delgado and 5 districts in Tete.

Table 1a cont'd.

Highest number of acutely food-insecure people in 2019 and 2020, pre-COVID-19

Countries	Source	Highest number of acutely food-insecure people in 2019 estimated pre-COVID-19					Highest number of acutely food-insecure people in 2020 estimated pre-COVID-19				
		Time period covered	Population of reference (millions) Percentage of population analysed	Population in IPC/CH Phase 2 (millions) Percentage of population analysed in IPC/CH Phase 2	Population in IPC/CH Phase 3 or above (millions) Percentage of population analysed in IPC/CH Phase 3 or above	Highest area phase classification	Time period covered	Population of reference (millions) Percentage of population analysed	Population in IPC/CH Phase 2 (millions) Percentage of population analysed in IPC/CH Phase 2	Population in IPC/CH Phase 3 or above (millions) Percentage of population analysed in IPC/CH Phase 3 or above	Highest area phase classification
Syrian Arab Republic	HRP	Jan-May 2019	18.3 100%	2.6 14%	6.6 36%	N/A					
Togo	CH	Oct-Dec 2019		0.5 9%	0.003 0%	Phase 2 Stressed	Jun-Aug 2020		0.5 8%	0.004 0%	Phase 2 Stressed
Turkey ² (Refugees)	WFP	Apr-Sep 2019	3.6 75%	1.6 58%	0.5 17%	N/A	Jan-Feb 2020	3.9 100%	2.3 58%	0.2 4%	N/A
Uganda	FEWS NET	Apr-Jul 2019	40.0 100%	N/A	1.5 4%	Phase 3 Crisis					
Ukraine	HNO	Dec 2019	42.2 15%	N/A	0.5 9%	N/A					
United Republic of Tanzania (16 districts)	IPC	Nov 2019-Apr 2020	58.0 8%	1.7 34%	1.0 21%	Phase 3 Crisis	Jan-Apr 2020	58.0 8%	1.7 34%	1.0 21%	Phase 3 Crisis
Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela	WFP	Jul-Sep 2019	28.5 100%	8.9 60%	9.3 32%	N/A					
Yemen	IPC	Dec 2018-Jan 2019	29.9 100%	8.9 30%	15.9 53%	Phase 4 Emergency					
Zambia (86 districts)	IPC	Oct 2019-Mar 2020	17.9 53%	3.1 33%	2.3 24%	Phase 4 Emergency	Jan-Mar 2020	17.9 53%	3.1 33%	2.3 24%	Phase 4 Emergency
Zimbabwe (rural population)	IPC	Oct-Dec 2019	14.6 64%	2.7 28%	3.6 38%	Phase 4 Emergency	Feb-Jun 2020	14.6 66%	2.8 29%	4.3 45%	Phase 4 Emergency

² The geographical or population coverage of estimates vary widely between 2019 and 2020 pre-COVID-19. Direct comparison cannot be made.

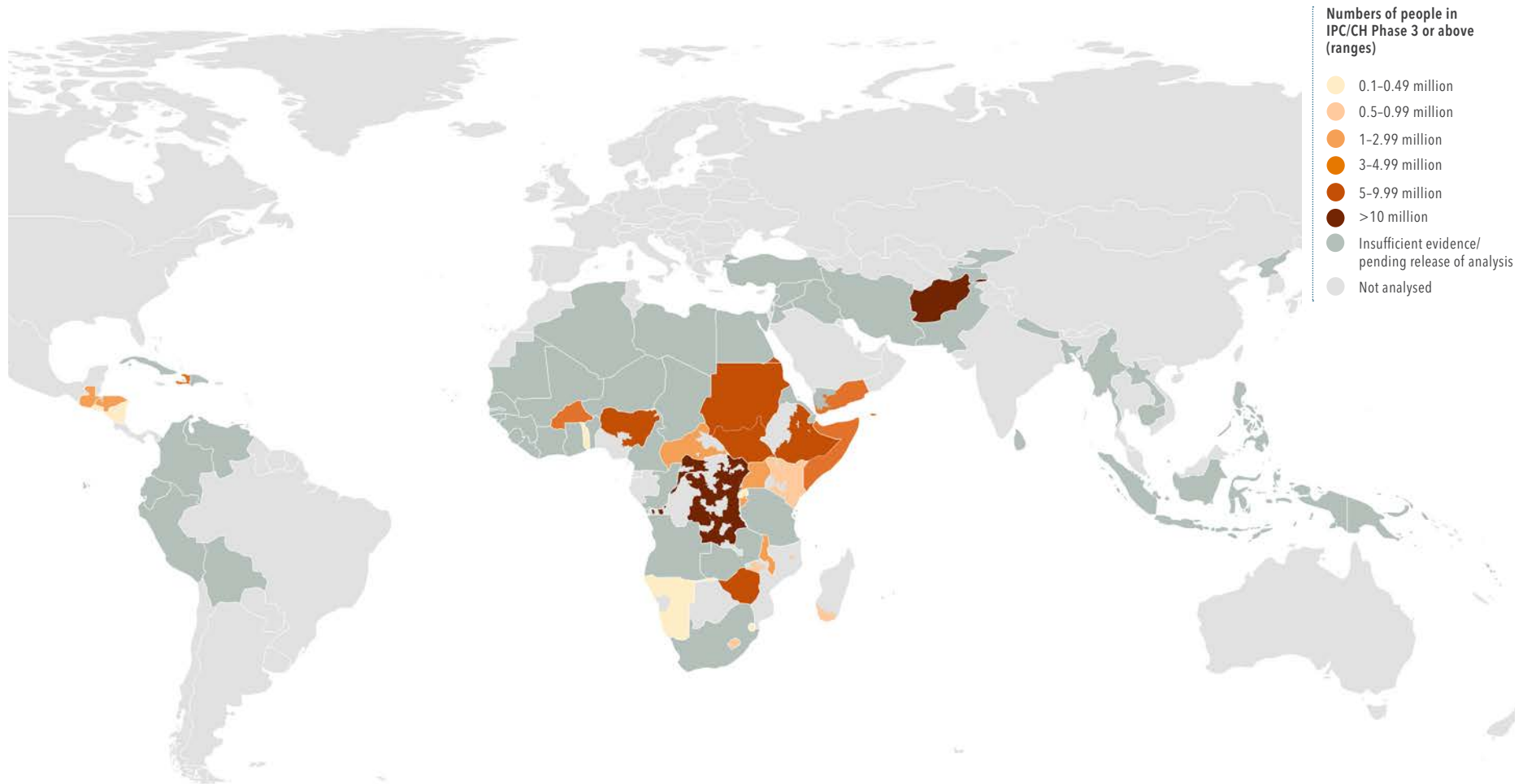
Table 1b cont'd.

Highest number of acutely food-insecure people in 2020, in times of COVID-19

Countries	Source	Highest number of acutely food-insecure people in 2020 estimated in times of COVID-19					Change in numbers of people in IPC/CH Phase 3 or above between 2019 peak estimates and 2020 estimates in times of COVID-19
		Time period covered	Population of reference (millions) Percentage of population analysed	Population in IPC/CH Phase 2 (millions) Percentage of population analysed in IPC/CH Phase 2	Population in IPC/CH Phase 3 or above (millions) Percentage of population analysed in IPC/CH Phase 3 or above	Highest area phase classification	
Syrian Arab Republic							
Togo	CH	Jun-Aug 2020		1.3 22%	0.28 5%	Phase 3 Crisis	Increase by 0.28 million people in absolute terms and by 5 percentage points in prevalence.
Turkey (Refugees)							
Uganda	FEWS NET	May-Aug 2020	100%	N/A	2.5-3.0	Phase 3 Crisis	
Ukraine							
United Republic of Tanzania							
Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela							
Yemen (south)	IPC	Jul-Dec 2020	29.8 27%	3.0 38%	3.2 40%	Phase 4 Emergency	Not directly comparable due to non-availability of analysis covering northern districts. When comparing the same 133 southern districts there is a decrease of more than 0.5 million people.
Zambia							
Zimbabwe	FEWS NET	Oct-Dec 2020	100%	N/A	5.0-6.0	Phase 3 Crisis	

Highest numbers of people in IPC/CH Phase 3 or above (in millions), estimated in times of COVID-19

Data available by 30 September, 2020



Note: The Yemen analysis covers south only. When north and south analyses are combined the numbers will likely be significantly over 10 million.

Source: FSIN GRFC 2020 September update.
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Regional overview of food crises



East Africa

Burundi Djibouti Eritrea Ethiopia Kenya Rwanda Somalia South Sudan Sudan Uganda

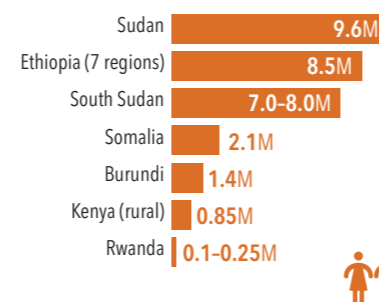


- Persisting conflict, economic challenges, high food prices, flooding and the desert locust outbreak, together with the socio-economic consequences of COVID-19, gravely threaten the food security of millions of people.
- The rapidly rising urban population working in the informal economy and living in informal settlements are most affected by job losses.
- Of great concern are the region's 9 million IDPs, as well as its 4.6 million refugees, the latter largely dependent on humanitarian food assistance, which has been cut by 10–30 percent.
- Many poor households faced loss of remittance income, particularly in Somalia, South Sudan, Kenya and Ethiopia.
- While above-average seasonal rains benefitted the recovery of the livestock sector after the losses of the 2016/17 drought, pastoralists still lost 20–40 percent of their income between March and May.
- Tens of thousands of hectares of farmland and pasture were damaged by locusts. Control measures were sometimes thwarted by COVID-19-related restrictions and flooding.
- Constrained access to health and nutrition services and poor diets aggravated the risk of acute malnutrition in children under 2 years.

In times of COVID-19

Figure 7

Number of people in IPC Phase 3 or above, in 2020

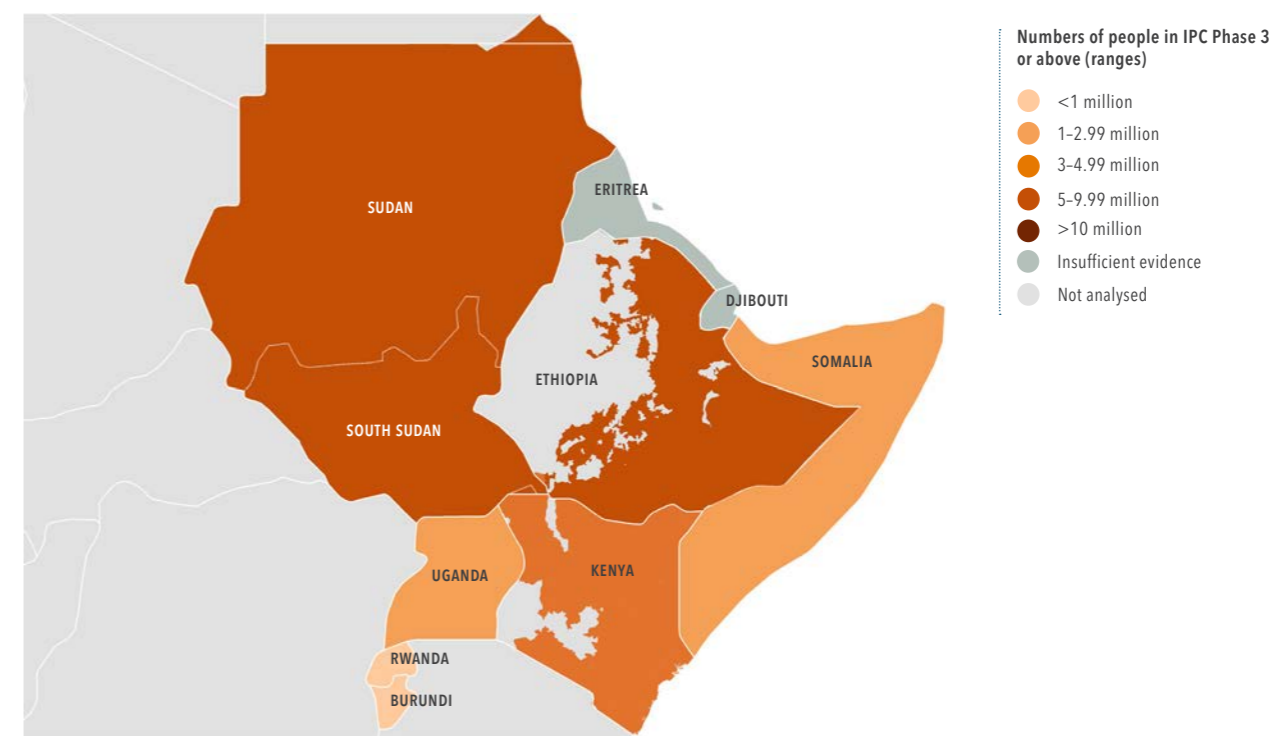


Source: IPC, FEWS NET.



Map 1

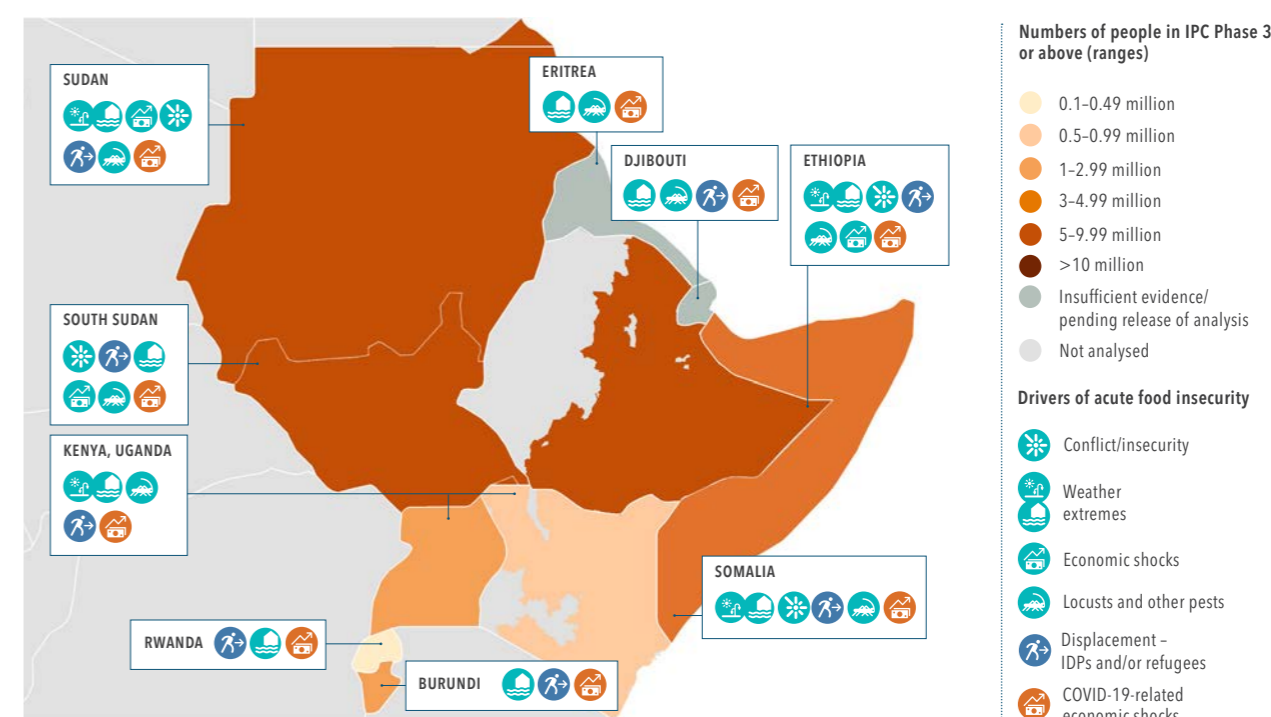
East Africa, acute food insecurity at peak point in 2019



Source: FSIN, GRFC 2020. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Map 2

East Africa, acute food insecurity estimates and drivers in 2020 in times of COVID-19



Source: FSIN, GRFC 2020 September update. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Country updates



The Sudan

A record number of people in the Sudan were in need of urgent humanitarian food and livelihood assistance from June–September 2020 with an estimated 9.6 million people (21 percent of the population analysed) classified in Crisis or worse levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) (IPC, June 2020). Although the data is not directly comparable due to the inclusion of new areas (West Darfur), when comparing the same areas there is an increase of 2.5 million people since the 2019 peak in June–August.

The latest ‘in times of COVID’ figures included around 2.2 million people in an Emergency acute food insecurity situation (IPC Phase 4) and 7.4 million people in Crisis (IPC Phase 3). Nearly 15.9 million people were estimated to be in Stressed (IPC Phase 2).

Increased and protracted displacement triggered by conflict, macroeconomic challenges and food price hikes exacerbated by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic all contributed to this alarming situation.

The potential expansion of desert locust infestations remained a concern as scattered bands of locusts were still being

9.6M IPC Phase 3 or above
in June–September 2020 (21% of population analysed)

7.4M IPC Phase 3 Crisis **2.2M** IPC Phase 4 Emergency

15.9M IPC Phase 2 Stressed

Source: Sudan IPC Technical Working Group, July 2020.

reported in mid-2020. Livestock prices were increasing – but at a lower rate than cereal prices. In June, retail prices of sorghum and millet remained 150–250 percent higher across most markets than in June 2019. Wheat prices also remained much higher than last year and the five-year average. Such increases outpaced rises in wage labour rates, eroding households’ purchasing power.

Of greatest concern were long-term IDPs located mostly in the Darfur states, and conflict-affected populations in South

Kordofan and Jebel Marra, where people continued to be displaced and face limited market and labour access, and high food prices coupled with limited humanitarian access. Chronically food-insecure, very poor households in Red Sea state who are particularly dependent on migratory labour and typically face food consumption deficits during the lean season were also expected to face large food consumption

gaps. Urban and labour-dependent households worst affected by COVID-19-related restrictions on population movements, economic activity and trade were of high concern too, including in Khartoum (FEWS NET, June 2020).

Floods affecting around 826 000 people as of 10 September (OCHA, September 2020) may worsen food insecurity.

Ethiopia (seven regions)

In seven regions of eastern Ethiopia, an estimated 8.5 million people (21 percent of the 41 million people analysed) were in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) levels of acute food insecurity from July–September, despite ongoing humanitarian food assistance. Of these, about 1.4 million were classified in Emergency (IPC Phase 4). The IPC analysis was carried out among rural populations dependent on Belg pastoral and agro-pastoral areas.

The largest numbers of people in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) were in Oromiya, accounting for 45 percent of the total followed by Somali and SNNPR. In some livelihood zones of Afar, Oromiya and Somali, at least 30 percent of the population was in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) (IPC, September 2020).

Desert locusts, poor rainfall performance in localized areas, flooding, conflict and climate-induced displacement, as well as

8.5M IPC Phase 3 or above
in July–September 2020 (21% of population analysed)

7.1M IPC Phase 3 Crisis **1.4M** IPC Phase 4 Emergency

13.0M IPC Phase 2 Stressed

Source: Ethiopia IPC Technical Working Group, September 2020.

loss of income and high food prices fuelled by the COVID-19 pandemic are driving this situation. Around 1.8 million IDPs and 1.4 million recent returnees who lost their assets while displaced, face significant food gaps, unless adequate food assistance is provided.

South Sudan

Acute food insecurity was forecast to remain at alarming levels with 7–8 million people expected to be in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) in February–August 2020 according to a FEWS NET IPC-compatible analysis. The lean season was exacerbated by localized insecurity, years of conflict-related asset depletion, the macroeconomic crisis, poorly functioning markets, lack of infrastructure and livelihood losses caused by widespread floods in northern and eastern areas.

In the pre-COVID analysis, the number of people facing Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) was set to rise from nearly 5.3 million (45 percent of the population) in January 2020 to 6.5 million (55 percent of the population) by May–July (IPC, January 2020).

Since the start of the pandemic, escalating inter-communal conflict, income losses and lower oil revenue, deficit crop production and persistently poor macroeconomic conditions further constrained household food availability and access. Acute food insecurity was most severe in conflict-affected areas of Jonglei, Lakes and Warrap, as well as in parts of Upper Nile, Unity, Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Eastern Equatoria, and Central Equatoria.

7.0–8.0M IPC Phase 3 or above
in February–August 2020

Source: FEWS NET IPC-compatible analysis.

Households may face Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) during the lean season in the most affected areas of Jonglei and Greater Pibor administrative area, where recent conflicts and two consecutive years of floods have eroded and exhausted coping capacities.

Even after the lifting of movement restrictions, domestic trade flows and business activity remained atypically low in July as did poor urban households’ income from daily casual labour and petty trade. Local currency depreciation, dependence on food imports, and increased transportation costs during the rainy season drove high and rising food prices, despite improvements in cross-border trade (FEWS NET, July 2020).

As of early September, about 600 000 people were affected by floods triggered by torrential rains since July (FAO-GIEWS, September 2020).



Uganda

An estimated 2.5–3 million people are expected to face Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) from May–August 2020, according to an IPC-compatible FEWS NET analysis.

COVID-19 related loss of employment is driving urban food insecurity. In Karamoja, increases in staple food prices, diminished purchasing power, floods, reduced casual labour opportunities, cattle raids and livestock diseases are among the drivers. Uganda hosts over 1.4 million refugees, mostly in 13 rural-based settlements, who face food ration cuts as well

2.5–3.0M IPC Phase 3 or above in May–August 2020

Source: FEWS NET IPC-compatible analysis.

as COVID-19-related loss of casual employment opportunities and low access to agricultural land. IPC analyses recently conducted in the capital Kampala, Karamoja and refugee settlements will be released shortly.

Somalia

About 2.1 million people were estimated to be in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) from October–December 2020 (IPC, September 2020). An additional 3 million people were classified in Stressed (IPC Phase 2).

The situation has been driven by multiple shocks, including the desert locust outbreak, erratic April–June rains, widespread floods, insecurity and conflict and the compounding effects of COVID-19 containment measures. The urban poor, including IDPs living in desperate conditions, have been particularly hit by the COVID-19-related decline in remittances, increased food prices, and fall in income-earning opportunities. High levels of sustained humanitarian assistance and government support have played a critical role in preventing worse acute food insecurity outcomes. In addition, 849 900 children under the

2.1M IPC Phase 3 or above in October–December 2020 (13% of population analysed)

1.7M IPC Phase 3 Crisis **0.4M** IPC Phase 4 Emergency

3.0M IPC Phase 2 Stressed

Source: Somalia IPC Technical Working Group, September 2020.

age of 5 are likely to be acutely malnourished through August 2021 (FSNAU-FEWS NET, September 2020).

Burundi

Over 1.4 million people (or 13 percent of the analysed population) were classified in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) in May as floods and landslides compounded the income-curtailling effects of COVID-19 mitigation measures. An additional 3.9 million people were in Stressed (IPC Phase 2) (IPC, May 2020).

The most-affected areas were Congo Nile Ridge, High Altitude and Imbo, where at least 15 percent of the population were in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above). The 42 000 people in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) were mainly in the Imbo zone. The number of acutely food-insecure people in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) was expected to fall to 859 000 in June–August 2020 (IPC, May 2020).

1.4M IPC Phase 3 or above in May 2020 (13% of population analysed)

1.4M IPC Phase 3 Crisis **42 000** IPC Phase 4 Emergency

3.9M IPC Phase 2 Stressed

Source: Burundi IPC Technical Working Group, May 2020.

Kenya (rural)

Around 850 600 people (6 percent of the population analysed) are expected to face Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) during October–December 2020 in 23 arid and semi-arid counties (ASALs) (IPC preliminary findings, September 2020).

The main food insecurity drivers are COVID-19-related restrictions, flooding across 36 of the 47 counties, conflict and insecurity in north-eastern Wajir, Marsabit, Garissa and Samburu counties and desert locusts, which invaded about 1 million hectares of cropland and rangeland across Turkana, Marsabit, Samburu, West Pokot and Tana River counties.

IPC analyses were conducted in 11 urban settlements in Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu, and will likely be released in October 2020.

0.85M IPC Phase 3 or above in October–December 2020 (6% of population analysed)

685 000 IPC Phase 3 Crisis **165 000** IPC Phase 4 Emergency

5.4M IPC Phase 2 Stressed

Source: Kenya IPC Technical Working Group, September 2020.

Rwanda

Between 100 000–250 000 people were expected to face acute food insecurity requiring urgent assistance in June–September. Despite the easing of lockdown measures, poor households in Kigali were not expected to earn enough to meet their basic food and non-food needs. By September 2020, the anticipated economic recovery remained modest with many businesses, particularly private hospitals, schools, hotels and restaurants, unable to re-hire staff. The July–November harvest in lowland areas was expected to be average to above average, leading to prices of most staple foods being below their five-year averages (FEWS NET, June and August 2020).

0.1–0.25M IPC Phase 3 or above in June–September 2020

Source: FEWS NET IPC-compatible analysis.

Drivers of acute food insecurity in mid-2020

Locusts and other pests

East Africa's exceptionally severe desert locust outbreak, the worst in at least 25 years, began in June 2019 (FAO-GIEWS, June 2020). Locust populations usually decline in the drier conditions at the end of the year, but heavy rains in eastern Ethiopia and Somalia in early December caused the situation to become extremely serious, and with abundant March–May rains, conditions for insect reproduction remained conducive until June 2020 (FAO, August 2020).

The most affected areas are Ethiopia, northern Kenya and central and northern Somalia. During July and August, a few swarms crossed into south-eastern South Sudan and north-eastern Uganda. Large-scale aerial and ground control operations mitigated the impact on pastures and crops, despite the logistical and operational constraints caused by COVID-19-related restrictive measures. These operations, in combination with weather conditions, reduced large-scale migration from Kenya to summer breeding areas in the Sudan (FAO-GIEWS, July 2020 and FAO, August 2020).

In Ethiopia, locusts attacked the secondary season June (Belg) crops, in central and eastern areas, but large-scale control operations averted widespread losses. In June, locusts migrated to summer breeding areas in northern Afar, Amhara and Tigray states, which also received several swarms from Yemen. This may become the epicentre of the infestation in the sub-region with major Meher season crop losses unless control operations are substantially scaled up (FAO-GIEWS, September 2020).

In arid and semi-arid pastoral and agro-pastoral areas of south-eastern Ethiopia, northern and eastern Kenya and central and northern Somalia, where the food security situation

is structurally fragile, infestation levels have been among the highest in the sub-region. Pasture losses were localized as control measures and the regeneration of rangeland resources fostered by the abundant seasonal rains prevented widespread damages (FAO-GIEWS, September 2020).

Forecast below-average October–December Deyr rains are likely to hinder insect reproduction, but pasture losses due to adult swarms could still be substantial, as the dry conditions will not allow an adequate regeneration of vegetation and there will be increased competition between locusts and grazing animals for limited resources (FAO-GIEWS, September 2020).

In Kenya, an alert for Rift Valley fever (RVF) was issued by FAO and IGAD in July, following the wettest East African long rains season on record since 1981, which is creating a conducive environment for the proliferation of RVF vectors. The risk of RVF was also high in eastern South Sudan, which would affect both livestock and human health (FEWS NET, July 2020).

Conflict/insecurity

Conflict and inter-communal violence persisted in parts of Somalia, South Sudan, the Sudan and Ethiopia. In Somalia, protracted conflict across southern and central areas continued to cause loss of life and assets, disrupt cropping activities, trade and population movements, and impede access to humanitarian assistance.

In Ethiopia in late June, there was an uptick in civil insecurity that led to protests across the country. Prior to this, insecurity had been ongoing along western and southern borders of Oromia region with Somali and Benishangul Gumuz regions,

western borders of Amhara and Benishagul Gumuz, and Southern Oromia with Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region (SNNP), resulting in nearly 2 million IDPs (FEWS NET, June 2020).

In South Sudan, major combat operations ceased following the September 2018 Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan. Although the implementation of the agreement was slow and a Government of National Unity was only formed in February 2020, the ceasefire held and the security situation improved, allowing substantial numbers of South Sudanese displaced internally and abroad to return (FAO & WFP, May 2020). However, in some areas of Warrap, Lakes and Jonglei states, an escalation of inter-communal violence since early 2020 (FEWS NET, June 2020) led to a high number of fatalities, forced displacement, sexual and gender-based violence, and other human rights abuses (OCHA, June 2020). Of greatest concern was recurring fighting between different ethnic groups in Bor and Pibor areas of Jonglei state, which caused large-scale displacement, disrupted food assistance delivery and impelled humanitarian organisations to evacuate (FEWS NET, July 2020).

season was particularly erratic, and the output of the main Gu harvest is estimated to be significantly below average (FAO-GIEWS, September 2020).

In northern areas, where the rainy season spans from June–September, several weeks of heavy rainfall in July/August resulted in widespread flooding over many areas of Ethiopia and the Sudan. Cumulative rainfall since June was above the long-term average over much of South Sudan and northern Ethiopia (FEWS NET, August 2020). While the rains benefited vegetation conditions and boosted yields, the floods resulted in localized losses of standing crops and livestock (FAO-GIEWS, September 2020).

Economic shocks

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the difficult macroeconomic conditions in Burundi, South Sudan, Somalia and to some extent Ethiopia elevated staple commodity prices while the weakening of local currencies increased prices of imported food and slowed down imports.

The Sudan continued to face a macroeconomic crisis, with severely limited reserves of foreign currency in the official banking system. In recent years, the Sudan's ability to access sufficient foreign exchange has been limited due to structural economic factors. Increasing reliance on imports for essential food and non-food items (agricultural inputs, health and medical equipment, etc.), are placing additional pressure on the Sudan's already limited capacity to meet foreign exchange needs (FEWS NET, June 2020).

In Ethiopia, inflation remained high related to the widening trade balance associated with infrastructure projects and the reduction in foreign currency reserves and liquidity (FEWS NET, June 2020). In South Sudan, inflation has been high since 2015 due to the monetization of deficits by the central bank and the fragile peace in the country (African Development Bank Group, July 2020).

Weather extremes

From March–May 2020, heavy rainfall across central and southern parts of the region resulted in widespread flooding and landslides across Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Uganda. According to IGAD, 2.4 million people were affected, including 700 000 who were displaced. The heavy rains during the period of 11–20 April were ranked among the wettest on the 40-year record in parts of Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia (FEWS NET, May 2020). Despite an early cessation of the March–May long Gu rains in several cropping areas, the substantial rainfall totals and high soil moisture levels sustained good vegetation conditions and the cereal outputs of the 2020 first season June/July harvests are estimated at above-average levels in most countries. By contrast, in key cropping areas of southern Somalia, the rainy

Figure 8

The COVID-19 crisis timeline in East Africa



COVID-19-related economic impacts

Since the first cases were reported in March, a variety of control measures were adopted with the aim of controlling the spread of COVID-19 and saving lives, and ensuring that health systems were not overwhelmed. Restrictions varied by country and by state. Governments started easing controls due to the consequences on economies and livelihoods, sometimes even amid increasing cases (WFP/UN Habitat, August 2020).

In Ethiopia, following the abrupt increase in the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases and associated deaths from late May, the government tightened control measures in areas where there were a high number of cases, such as Addis Ababa and Somali region (FEWS NET, July 2020).

Loss of income

Compounding the impact of other shocks, COVID-19 movement restrictions disrupted demand for labour, export of commodities and services, constrained physical access to income sources, and reduced remittances.

For East Africa's rapidly rising urban population, the informal economy is estimated to account for about 61 percent of employment opportunities and 93 percent of all new jobs created (AfDB, OECD & UNDP, 2016). These informal sector employees, who often survive on daily hand-to-mouth wages, have been highly affected by response measures, such as stay at home orders and closure of open markets (FAO, May 2020).

Losses of remittances were a major contributor to falls in income levels in the region. In Somalia, an estimated 40 percent of the population receive remittances, mainly in urban settings where they sometimes forward money to rural relatives. These remittances account for up to one-third of the total GDP of USD 6 billion (Migration Data Portal, 2020).

In Ethiopia, for instance, in May over 60 percent of urban households indicated a decrease in total income earned since the start of the outbreak, according to a World Bank nationally representative phone-based survey. The same survey found that 40 percent of households that rely on farming, livestock, or fishing had seen a decrease or loss of this income source since the start of the outbreak. On top of this, domestic or international remittances decreased with nearly a quarter of households reporting a decrease and 40 percent reporting a total loss. Among rural households surveyed across the country, over 50 percent indicated a decrease or total loss in income (WB, May 2020).

Disrupted regional trade and supply chains

The closure of border crossing points and markets in border towns, heavy truck clearance requirements, and delays associated with mandatory COVID-19 testing of truck drivers in some areas, led to higher transportation costs and decline

Figure 9
Economic indicators (2019 estimates and 2020 forecasts)

Countries	Real GDP growth at constant market prices (percent)		Inflation – Consumer Price Index (percent)	
	2019 e	2020 f	2019 e	2020 f
Burundi	1.8	1.0	0.8	5.0
Djibouti	7.5	1.3	3.3	2.6
Eritrea	3.7	0.7	-15.8	1.0
Ethiopia	9.0	3.2	12.5	20.1
Kenya	5.4	1.5	5.2	5.7
Rwanda	9.4	2.0	2.4	6.9
Somalia	2.9	3.2	3.1	3.0
South Sudan	3.2	-4.3	106.9	80.2
Sudan	-2.6	-2.1	51.3	62.1
Uganda	6.5	3.3	3.1	3.5

e = estimate f = forecast

Source: WB, 2020.

in exports and informal trade of staple commodities. This was exacerbated by business uncertainty in destination markets associated with variations in preventive measures between countries (FEWS NET, June 2020).

The restrictive measures implemented to curb the spread of the virus also affected internal trade flows between rural/surplus areas and urban/food deficit areas.

In several countries of the sub-region, prices of cereals increased sharply in the first semester of 2020 as panic buying, speculative trading and supply chain disruptions following the implementation of restrictive measures exerted upward pressure and compounded seasonal patterns (FAO-GIEWS, July 2020).

From June, cereal prices declined in the countries where the newly harvested first season crops and the easing of lockdown measures improved domestic availabilities, including in Kenya, South Sudan and Uganda. However, lower prices do not necessarily reflect improved food access as they are also a consequence of lower purchasing power depressing demand, especially among poorest households. The declining food prices also reduce incomes for farmers.

Overall, food prices remained higher than 2019 and five-year average levels in most monitored markets in the region. Food prices increases were highest for fresh products such as vegetables, meat and fish mainly driven by shortages related to disruptions in the supply chain for fresh foods following movement restrictions (WFP/UN Habitat, August 2020).

For example, in South Sudan, prices of maize and sorghum generally doubled between February and May in the capital, Juba, as COVID-19 screening measures at border points in Uganda, the country's main source for cereals, slowed

commodity trade flows. Subsequently, prices declined by about 10 percent from May–August as the first season harvest and imports of newly-harvested crops from Uganda increased market availabilities and movement restrictions eased. However, prices remained about 60 percent above the already exceptionally high levels of the previous year, due in part to inadequate domestic supplies, a difficult macro-economic situation and the lingering impact of protracted conflict (FAO-GIEWS, September 2020).

Constrained government finances

The World Bank estimates that over the next five years, emerging and developing economies could experience drops in output of nearly 8 percent while oil-dependent countries such as South Sudan could decline by as much as 11 percent (WB, June 2020). Across the region, remittances serve as a vital source of foreign exchange revenue that is expected to be adversely affected by the COVID-19 crisis. For instance, in South Sudan, remittances of USD 1.3 billion accounted for 34.1 percent of total GDP in 2019, while households in Kenya and Ethiopia received USD 2.8 billion and USD 531 million respectively in remittances (Migration Data Portal, 2020).

Displacement update

The region is one of the world's leading sources and hosts of IDPs, refugees and asylum seekers who, due to limited livelihood opportunities and degraded coping mechanisms, are particularly vulnerable to acute food insecurity and malnutrition. UNHCR estimates that the nine countries covered in this regional overview hosted about 8.6 million IDPs and over 4 million refugees and asylum seekers by the end of 2019.

Although 1.3 million Ethiopians displaced by inter-communal violence and 200 000 South Sudanese were able to return to their homes in 2019, instability and conflict in Ethiopia, Somalia and South Sudan still continued to trigger displacement (IOM, May 2020). In 2020 – as in 2019 – devastating floods following heavy rains also drove people into displacement (IOM, May, 2020). In Somalia, the scale of displacement due to the 2020 Gu floods (412 000) was comparable to the number of people displaced during the 2019 Deyr floods (363 000 people). Additionally, conflict-related displacement from January–May 2020 (131 100 people) was 60 percent higher than the same period of 2019 (FEWS NET, June 2020).

The COVID-19 containment measures, including border restrictions and controls, came on top of existing emergency conditions for displaced people in the region, with 60 percent of refugees already experiencing food ration cuts due to underfunding (UNHCR, 2020). Many IDPs have weak social and family/clan connections and struggle to access social

Additional challenges for pastoralists

COVID-19-related market closures, movement restrictions and fear of contracting the disease limited pastoralists' ability to engage in alternative livelihoods during the rainy season. The decrease in demand for livestock led to income losses while the sudden closure of livestock markets in March and April left producers with market-ready animals and no buyers. Producers lacked access to goods and services to deal with livestock disease outbreaks as government veterinary officials had reduced budgets and private animal health networks struggled to adapt to operating environment.

Above-average seasonal rains enabled pastoralists to partially rebuild herds lost during the 2017 drought – but herd sizes were still below average in central and northern Somalia and in south-eastern Ethiopia (Mercy Corps, August 2020).

support, which would typically offer vital forms of assistance in times of need (FEWS NET, June 2020).

Uganda remained the biggest refugee-hosting country in the region and one of the largest in the world. However, following 21 800 new refugee arrivals in the first three months of the year, Uganda closed its international borders to prevent the spread of COVID-19. There were no more until early July when 3 000 refugees arrived from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, following temporary re-opening of the border on humanitarian grounds (UNHCR, September 2020).

Nutrition

Even before the current challenges, an estimated 9 million children under the age of 5 were suffering from acute malnutrition, including 2 million facing severe acute malnutrition (UNICEF, WHO, World Bank, 2020). Lockdown measures, diverted funds, overwhelmed health services and reduced access to nutrition services – in addition to rising acute food insecurity – are of great concern for the health and nutrition status of women and children in the region.

Partly as a result of cancellations of mass screening, 2020 admissions for treatment of severely wasted children are generally below 2019 admissions for January–May, especially in Kenya, South Sudan and Somalia. Access to affordable, nutritious foods for complementary feeding remains severely threatened by the loss of incomes for the most vulnerable households. Funding to increase the scale up of quality nutrition services and for pre-positioning of key nutrition supplies have not been forthcoming as expected (IGAD Food Security and Nutrition Response Strategy, July 2020).

Central and Southern Africa

Angola Central African Republic Democratic Republic of the Congo Eswatini Lesotho Madagascar Malawi Mozambique Namibia Republic of Congo South Africa United Republic of Tanzania Zambia Zimbabwe

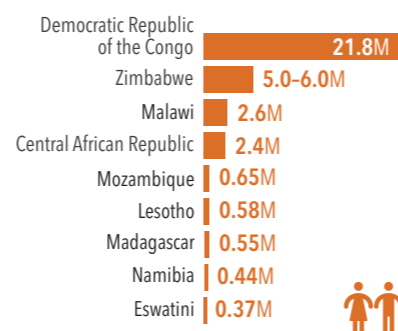


- Communities whose coping capacities have been eroded by consecutive years of drought and economic stressors face mounting levels of acute food insecurity as COVID-19-related restrictions have led to income losses, weakening households' purchasing power.
- Favourable rains at the beginning of 2020 increased harvests in most countries, but southern parts of Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia experienced an early cessation of rains. Zimbabwe received below-average rainfall and high temperatures.
- COVID-19 amplified poor macroeconomic conditions, particularly in Zimbabwe, where annual food inflation reached 977 percent in July.
- The urban poor face deepening poverty and acute food insecurity as many work in the informal economy and rely on markets for food.
- Conflicts continue in the Central African Republic, eastern areas of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and northern Mozambique where displacement numbers doubled between March and June.
- Acute child malnutrition could increase by 25 percent or more in late 2020–2021, mainly as a result of increased food insecurity.

In times of COVID-19

Figure 10

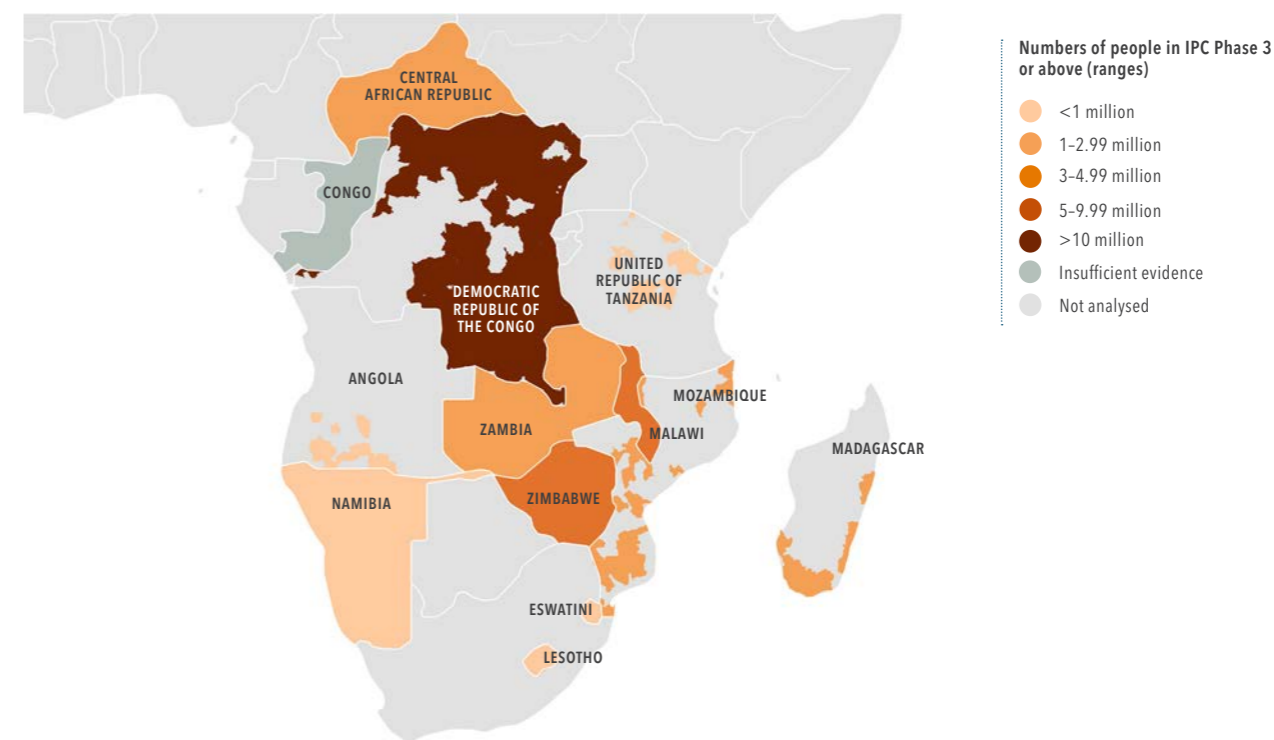
Number of people in IPC Phase 3 or above, in 2020



Source: IPC and FEWS NET.

Map 3

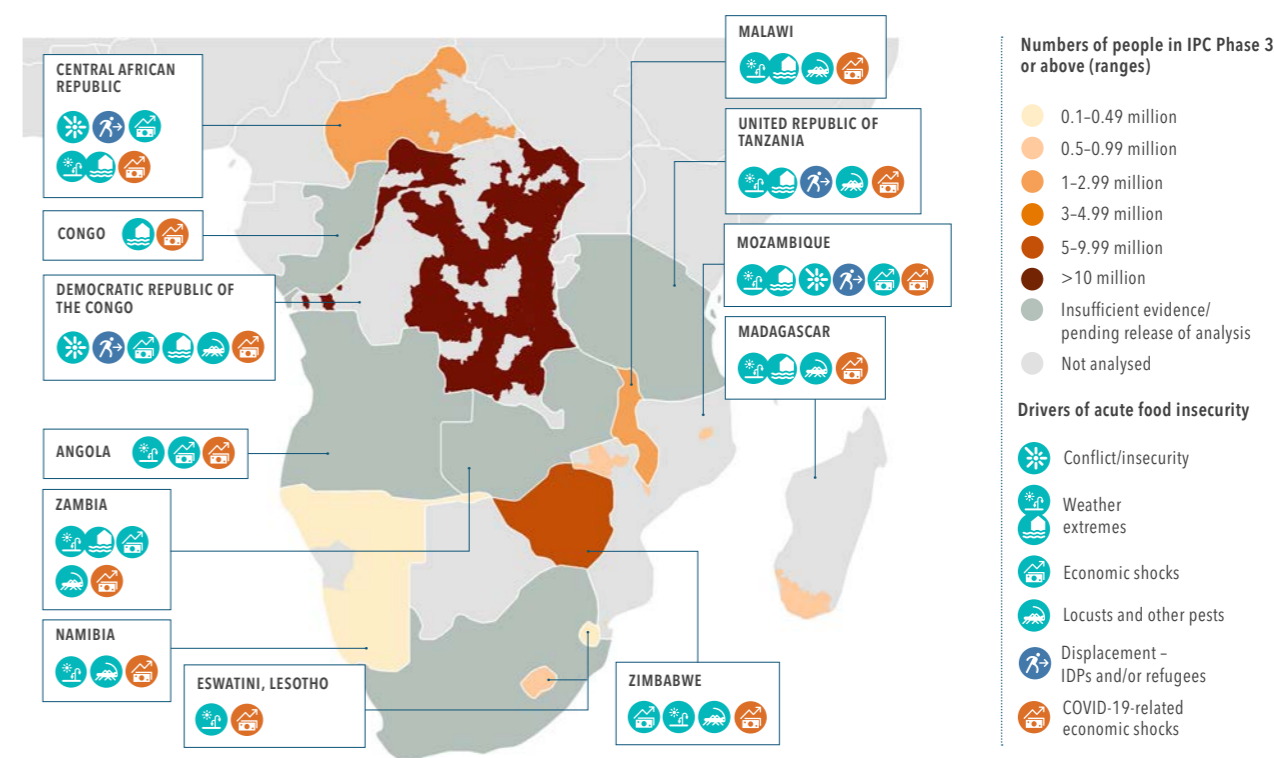
Central and Southern Africa, acute food insecurity at peak point in 2019



Source: FSIN, GRFC 2020. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Map 4

Central and Southern Africa, acute food insecurity estimates and drivers in 2020 in times of COVID-19



Source: FSIN, GRFC 2020 September update. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Country updates



Democratic Republic of the Congo

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 21.8 million people – or 1 in 3 people analysed – are classified in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) from July–December 2020. This figure includes 5.7 million classified in Emergency (IPC Phase 4).

The provinces of North and South Kivu, Ituri and Kasai Central have the highest numbers of acutely food-insecure people (IPC, September, 2020).

A further 29 million people (44 percent of the population analysed) are classified in Stressed (IPC Phase 2).

The 40 percent increase in the number of people requiring urgent food and livelihood assistance since the same period last year (15.6 million in Crisis or worse in July–December 2019) can partly be attributed to the 11 percent increase in the population analysed – from around 60 million in 2019 to nearly 67 million in 2020.

However, there is still a significant rise in the prevalence of acutely food-insecure people in need of urgent assistance – up from 26 percent in June–December 2019 to 33 percent between July and December 2020.

21.8M IPC Phase 3 or above
in July–December 2020 (33% of population analysed)

16.1M IPC Phase 3 Crisis
5.7M IPC Phase 4 Emergency

29.0M IPC Phase 2 Stressed

Source: Democratic Republic of the Congo IPC Technical Working Group, September 2020.

This grave situation is largely driven by conflict/insecurity in Ituri, North and South Kivu, Tanganyika and Maniema, which has continued to drive displacement, leading to a significant disruption of agricultural and livelihood activities (CMP, June 2020). It is also due to floods, plant and animal diseases, and the major impact of COVID-19 containment measures on food prices and household livelihoods, compounding pre-existing economic decline.

Zimbabwe

An estimated 5–6 million people were classified in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) from October–December 2020 in rural areas.

Lockdown measures from the end of March were eased in May–June, but became more stringent by the end of July amid growing COVID-19 cases (FEWS NET, July 2020).

The ZimVAC analysis does not include urban areas where lack of trade had a grave impact on households. Nationally, the household average monthly income decreased from USD 44 in 2019 to USD 33 in 2020 (ZimVAC, September 2020). Transport restrictions negatively affected supplies and costs of agricultural inputs, which farmers need urgently to recover from back-to-back droughts. Macroeconomic

5.0–6.0M IPC Phase 3 or above
in October–December 2020

Source: FEWS NET IPC-compatible analysis, 2020.

conditions continued to be volatile, characterized by depreciation of the national currency, low foreign reserves and high unemployment. Annual food inflation rate reached 977 percent in July (RBZ, September 2020).

Nationally, 4.5 percent of under 5s were acutely malnourished, up from 3.6 percent in 2019. Of them, 2.0 percent were suffering from SAM. Just 2.1 percent of 6–23 month-olds received a minimum acceptable diet – even worse than the 6.9 percent in 2019 (ZimVAC, September 2020).

Malawi

Around 2.6 million people were expected to face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) levels of acute food insecurity during the October 2020–March 2021 lean period, representing around 15 percent of the population.

The majority of these people (2.03 million) are in the rural deficit-producing southern region, where floods and dry spells caused a production shortfall and led to a slow livelihood recovery from previous seasons. Some 586 000 acutely food-insecure people in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) are in four cities (Lilongwe, Blantyre, Mzuzu and Zomba), where households face reduced income from self-employment and loss of jobs. The impacts of COVID-19 mitigation measures have also had an effect on remittance-dependent households. An additional 6.2 million people are classified in Stressed (IPC Phase 2).

2.6M IPC Phase 3 or above
in October 2020–March 2021 (15% of population analysed)

2.6M IPC Phase 3 Crisis

6.2M IPC Phase 2 Stressed

Source: Malawi IPC Technical Working Group, September 2020.

Central African Republic

Almost 2.4 million people (representing 51 percent of the population analysed) were in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) during the lean season, despite planned food assistance. Around 0.75 million people, representing 16 percent of the population, were in Emergency (IPC Phase 4). In addition, 1.6 million were classified in Stressed (IPC Phase 2).

This represents a 31 percent increase since May–August 2019 when 1.8 million were in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above). There was a significant deterioration in the situation in Bangui due to the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on movements and high food prices (FAO-GIEWS, June 2020).

Renewed conflict between armed groups and the resurgence of inter-communal violence in some sub-prefectures, and associated displacement, high food prices and a below-average agricultural season, were the main drivers of this

2.4M IPC Phase 3 or above
in May–August 2020 (51% of population analysed)

1.61M IPC Phase 3 Crisis
0.75M IPC Phase 4 Emergency

1.6M IPC Phase 2 Stressed

Source: Central African Republic IPC Technical Working Group, May 2020.

deterioration. Seasonal attacks of pests, such as armyworms and locusts, remained inadequately treated due to the persistence of conflict limiting access to fields and lack of funding (IPC, May 2020).



Mozambique (Maputo and Matola, 2 districts in Cabo Delgado and 5 districts in Tete)

From June–November 2020, about 364 000 people are classified in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) in the cities of Maputo and Matola. From October–November at the start of lean season 285 200 people are classified in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) in seven rural districts of Tete and Cabo Delgado. Depletion of food reserves, increased food prices, the impact of COVID-19 and the escalation of conflict in Cabo Delgado are driving food insecurity in rural areas. In urban areas, lower demand for casual labour, reduced remittances and restrictions on informal imports of goods from South Africa, as well as above-average commodity prices are the main factors.

0.65M IPC Phase 3 or above in June–November 2020 (18% of population analysed)*

0.61M IPC Phase 3 Crisis **38 300** IPC Phase 4 Emergency

1.1M IPC Phase 2 Stressed

* The population analysed is only 11 percent of the total population. The figures combine both IPC analyses. Source: Mozambique IPC Technical Working Group, April 2020.

Lesotho

From October 2020–March 2021, around 580 000 people are expected to be in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) primarily due to high food prices and the effects of COVID-19 restrictions, notwithstanding the recovery in agricultural production (FAO-GIEWS, July 2020). This includes around 100 000 people in Emergency (IPC Phase 4).

The country's economic growth was already in decline before COVID-19 related restrictions shut down the manufacturing sector and border closures limited economic migration options with South Africa (FEWS NET, July 2020).

0.58M IPC Phase 3 or above in October 2020–March 2021 (40% of population analysed)

0.48M IPC Phase 3 Crisis **0.1M** IPC Phase 4 Emergency

0.48M IPC Phase 2 Stressed

Source: Lesotho IPC Technical Working Group, August 2020.

Madagascar (South)

The number of people in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) in nine southern districts was expected to reach around 555 000 (24 percent of the population analysed) from April–July during the harvest season. Around 27 000 were expected to be in Emergency (IPC Phase 4).

The good rainfall forecast during the analysis conducted in October 2019 did not occur. Almost all districts of the Great South were affected by drought between January and March 2020, prompting an early start to the lean season. Ampanihy and Tsihombe districts were the most affected, with 25 percent of households expected to be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) and 5 percent in Emergency (IPC Phase 4). The socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 restriction measures including market supply chain disruptions, high food prices and lack of work in urban centres aggravated the situation (IPC, April 2020).

0.55M IPC Phase 3 or above in April–July 2020 (24% of population analysed)

0.53M IPC Phase 3 Crisis **27 000** IPC Phase 4 Emergency

1.0M IPC Phase 2 Stressed

Source: Madagascar IPC Technical Working Group, April 2020.

Namibia

Around 441 000 people (20 percent of the population analysed) are expected to face Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) during the October 2020–March 2021 lean season in 13 regions of the country. This represents a deterioration compared to the same period in 2019–2020 when 18 percent of the population was estimated to be facing Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above).

The main drivers are prolonged dry spells, flooding and COVID-19 restrictions, especially in northern areas where people work in tourism. No assessments were conducted in the region of Erongo because of movement restrictions (IPC, September 2020). Outbreaks of African migratory locust, first detected in February 2020, threaten crop and livestock production, and increase the likelihood of worsening food insecurity and of livelihood losses (FAO, September, 2020).

0.44M IPC Phase 3 or above in October 2020–March 2021 (20% of population analysed)

0.43M IPC Phase 3 Crisis **14 000** IPC Phase 4 Emergency

0.65M IPC Phase 2 Stressed

Source: Namibia IPC Technical Working Group, September 2020.

Eswatini

An estimated 370 000 people are expected to be in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) from October 2020–March 2021. This includes around 60 000 people in Emergency (IPC Phase 4). The analysis was conducted in four rural districts, Manzini, Shiselweni, Lubombo and Hhohho, and two urban ones, Hhohho urban and Manzini urban.

The high prevalence of acute food insecurity is due to a combination of insufficient food production, high prices of food and the negative effects of COVID-19 on economic activities, which have resulted in a widespread loss of jobs and livelihoods. Early rainfall deficits and reduced sowings affected cereal production, increasing the need for food imports, while disrupted food supply chains negatively affected food availability (IPC, August 2020).

0.37M IPC Phase 3 or above in October 2020–March 2021 (32% of population analysed)

0.3M IPC Phase 3 Crisis **60 000** IPC Phase 4 Emergency

0.38M IPC Phase 2 Stressed

Source: Eswatini IPC Technical Working Group, August 2020.

Drivers of acute food insecurity in mid-2020

Weather extremes and pests

Southern Africa is increasingly prone to delays and premature cessation of the rainy season, unusual rainfall patterns and long dry spells. In 2019, the region was hit by two consecutive cyclones, Idai and Kenneth which decimated crops and livelihoods. Between 2015/16 and 2019/20, three out of five agricultural seasons were affected by drought conditions. In 2020, the region's above-average harvest (FAO-GIEWS, September 2020) reflected more favourable weather conditions in the second half of the agricultural season.

The rainy season had a late onset over most of the region but favourable rains in the beginning of 2020 had a positive impact on crops. Significant rainfall deficits in March and April, particularly in Mozambique and Zimbabwe, adversely impacted agricultural production. In addition, poor rains were recorded in south-western and north-western parts of Botswana, southern parts of Madagascar and Malawi and parts of central Zambia. These dry conditions, compounded by high temperatures from March, wilted many of the late-planted crops (FEWS NET, April 2020).

Sporadic, heavy rain caused localized flooding in parts of Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia, which ruined infrastructure, caused crop damage and loss, and led to displacement between December 2019 and March 2020 (SADC, July 2020).

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, recurring flooding in Kasai, North Kivu, South Kivu, Ituri and Tanganyika provinces led to the loss of over 50 percent of crops in some areas (SADC, July 2020).

Weather conditions were conducive to crop pests and

disease outbreaks. In addition to the African armyworm, African migratory locust and red locust hopper bands were present in southern Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe though minimal damage was reported on the 2020 crops (SADC, July 2020). COVID-19 lockdown measures have impeded efforts to swiftly control the swarms. Concerns remain for the 2020/21 cropping season, as outbreaks have not been fully contained in Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe (FAO, September 2020).

Conflict/insecurity

Pockets of conflict and instability persisted in the region, fuelling displacement, disrupting livelihoods and limiting access to food. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, conflict with non-state armed groups particularly in Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu provinces, continued to drive displacement (OCHA, February 2020). According to OCHA, an estimated 366 900 people were newly displaced from June–August 2020, with limited access to their livelihoods and normal food sources (FEWS NET, August 2020).

In the Central African Republic, despite the favourable rains throughout the country, the resurgence of violence by armed groups in the north-west and south-east and increased destruction of fields by transhumant herders are disrupting agricultural activities, likely resulting in sharp reductions in crop production (FEWS NET, August 2020).

In northern Mozambique's Cabo Delgado province, armed violence has steadily increased throughout the year, driving total displacement to 250 000 people as of June 2020 – more than double the March 2020 estimates (OCHA, July 2020).

Economic shocks

Several countries in the region have faced depreciation of their national currencies, triggering inflation and resulting in the higher costs of food imports. Wider fiscal deficits and larger public debt are expected in 2020 (FAO & WFP, July 2020).

In Zimbabwe, prices of staple cereal foods have risen steeply in 2020, contributing to an annual inflation rate of nearly 840 percent in July. The key factor underlying the exceptionally high prices has been the persisting depreciation of the country's currency, exacerbated by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which also contributed to the sharp contraction in the economy. Reduced domestic cereal harvests in 2019 and 2020 were additional factors that exerted strong upward pressure on prices, as they led to tighter domestic supplies and caused a substantial increase in import needs that accentuated the effects of imported inflation on domestic food prices (FAO-GIEWS, September 2020).

In Zambia, despite seasonal declines in food prices underpinned by the large harvest in 2020, prices of the main food staple, maize, were above year-earlier values in August. The higher yearly levels are the result of a weaker currency, which has depreciated sharply against the USD since March as a consequence of COVID-19, while localized production shortfalls also propped up higher prices in parts of the country (FAO-GIEWS, August 2020).

In Mozambique, prices remained relatively elevated and above their year-earlier levels. Following the main harvest, increased food supplies led to a seasonal decrease in maize grain prices starting in May, which generally outweighed upward pressure from the impact of COVID-19 lockdown measures (FAO-WFP, July 2020).

COVID-19-related economic impacts

Since the first COVID-19 case in Southern Africa was reported in March, governments within the region began adopting restrictions on movements, focusing on border and travel

restrictions, to curb the spread of the virus (WFP, August 2020). These measures have led to multiple socio-economic consequences which threaten to reverse progress made in reducing poverty (UN, March 2020).

Loss of income

Full and partial lockdowns to reduce the spread of the virus negatively affected income-earning activities such as petty trade and informal employment, exposing many urban households to increased levels of acute food insecurity as they cannot afford to purchase foods (FEWS NET, May 2020).

In Malawi, for instance, although the country recorded an above-average cereal harvest, which is estimated to have improved rural households stocks and income, COVID-19 restrictions on movement disrupted livelihood activities for households in urban and peri-urban areas, including Blantyre, Zomba, Lilongwe, and Mzuzu. Households reliant on trading and casual labour were estimated to be the hardest hit (FEWS NET, July 2020).

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, disruptions to trade flows along the borders with Angola, Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia negatively affected the income of poor households (FAO-GIEWS, May 2020).

Remittances from wage earners in South Africa and elsewhere, vital for millions in Zimbabwe, Malawi, Mozambique and Lesotho, have significantly fallen (FEWS NET, June 2020). In Lesotho, for example, around 24 percent of the country's GDP was derived from remittances in 2019. In Zimbabwe, remittances account for 8.1 percent of GDP (WB, 2020). In-country remittances have also dropped as urban households who remit to their families in rural areas were unable to access normal incomes. Migrants returning to rural areas also increased pressure on rural households to provide food for extra household members (SADC, July 2020).

In Mozambique, the high prevalence of acute food insecurity in urban areas is mainly due to reduced casual labour

Figure 11

The COVID-19 crisis timeline in Central and Southern Africa



opportunities, lower levels of remittances and high prices of food items (FAO-GIEWS, May 2020).

Disrupted regional trade and supply chains

The 2020 regional agricultural production season was not significantly affected by COVID-19 due to the timing of the agricultural cycle. While planting for the 2020 main season started well before the COVID-19 outbreak, the harvest was ongoing by the time movement restrictions were adopted.

To support the movement of critical goods and services, the Council of Ministers of the SADC region adopted guidelines for Southern Africa in early April. The designation of food production as an essential service during COVID-19 lockdown measures allowed the food supply chain to continue to operate, though markets functioned at varying degrees throughout the region (SADC, July 2020). Most countries did not impose significant measures to limit agricultural labourers' movement, though some farmers in Madagascar, Malawi and Zimbabwe reported difficulty in selling produce in city centres during lockdowns (FEWS NET, August 2020).

Eswatini, Lesotho and Zimbabwe – markets dependent on South Africa – were affected by COVID-19 border restrictions in March and April. As grain supplies in these markets dwindled, localised price spikes were observed. Similar trends were observed across most rural markets for countries with lockdowns, including in Botswana, Namibia and Madagascar. Movement of food commodities, although allowed in these countries, was restricted, and this resulted in shortages in some rural markets, triggering price increases (SADC, July 2020). In most countries prices of cereals and other food items levelled off or declined from May 2020 thanks to harvests and sustained imports (FAO, July 2020).

Constrained government finances

As a result of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, all countries have had their economic growth forecasts cut, with most projected to experience a recession in 2020 (see figure 12). In the face of these economic downturns and associated declines in government revenues, countries' expenditure needs have increased in several areas, including health services and programmes that support vulnerable populations. This is foreseen to cause a widening in fiscal deficits and have negative implications for debt sustainability (IMF, June 2020).

Many of the countries in the region have a high dependence on exports of primary commodities, relatively weak sovereign balance sheets, high debt burdens and volatile currencies. Recessionary trends at the global level are having direct impacts on commodity exports in the region, ranging from copper in Zambia, precious metals in the United Republic of Tanzania, coltan in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Figure 12
Economic indicators (2019 estimates and 2020 forecasts)

Countries	Real GDP growth at constant market prices (percent)		Inflation – Consumer Price Index (percent)	
	2019 e	2020 f	2019 e	2020 f
Central African Republic	3.1	0.8	2.8	3.5
Democratic Republic of the Congo	4.4	-2.2	4.6	11.0
Eswatini	1.3	-2.8	2.6	3.8
Lesotho	1.4	-5.1	5.3	4.0
Madagascar	4.9	-1.2	5.6	4.8
Malawi	4.4	2.0	9.3	10.1
Mozambique	2.2	1.3	2.8	5.0
Namibia	-1.1	-4.8	2.9	2.5
United Republic of Tanzania	5.8	2.5	3.8	3.5
South Africa	0.2	-7.1	0.1	-7.1
Zambia	1.7	-0.8	9.1	12.9
Zimbabwe	-8.1	-10.0	255.1	250.0

e = estimate f = forecast

Source: WB, 2020.

and petroleum in Angola. In Angola, oil accounts for around 75 percent of total government revenue and 90 percent of export revenues. Three-quarters of Angolan oil production for export reportedly remained unsold in April. When the price of oil plummeted from USD 61.5 in December 2019 to USD 23.2 in March because of COVID-19, the drop exacerbated the shortage of foreign currency. Angola, Lesotho and Zambia are forecast to be among the countries most exposed to the economic impact of COVID-19 (WFP, May 2020).

The Democratic Republic of the Congo faces a shortage in foreign currency reserves as exports including coffee, tobacco, cacao and metals have dropped due to subdued export demand and disruptions to logistical services due to COVID-19. This has reduced funds for public spending and caused the depreciation of the local currency, whose value decreased by 14 percent from April to June and led to higher food prices (FAO-GIEWS, September 2020). As the country sees the number of COVID-19 cases increase, its strained health care system must also continue to manage the 11th outbreak of Ebola and measles and cholera (FEWS NET, August 2020).

Mozambique is vulnerable to the economic impacts of COVID-19, given its dependence on food imports and primary commodity exports. (FAO & WFP, July 2020).

As of early September 2020, Mozambique and Zimbabwe were already in debt distress while the Central African Republic, Malawi and Zambia were at high risk (WB, June 2020).

Deepening inequalities

The COVID-19 lockdown has aggravated already high levels of poverty in the region and risks deepening inequality within countries. The urban poor in particular have been suffering since the start of the lockdown. Not only are many employed in the informal economy, which provides no social safety nets, they also rely on the market for their food.

Not only are poorer households experiencing lower incomes, they are also facing increased health care costs because of COVID-19 (SADC, July 2020). The growing number of COVID-19 patients risks overcrowding health facilities, and patients with high burden diseases like AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria could lack access and/or adequate care.

Displacement

Around 6 million people are internally displaced in the region's three conflict-affected countries – the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mozambique. With over 5 million IDPs by the end of 2019, the Democratic Republic of the Congo hosts the highest number of IDPs in Africa (UNHCR, June 2020).

As of July 2020, the country hosted about 527 000 refugees, mainly from Burundi, the Central African Republic, Rwanda and South Sudan (UNHCR, July 2020). About half of them were hosted in the provinces of North Kivu and South Kivu, while the remaining half were in the northern provinces of Bas Uele, Haut Uele, Ituri, South Ubangi and North Ubangi.

The largest number of acutely food-insecure people are in the areas with a high concentration of IDPs and refugees, including Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu (FAO-GIEWS, May 2020).

By 31 July 2020, there were also over 922 000 Congolese refugees in 20 sub-Saharan African countries with 45 percent of them in Uganda (UNHCR, July 2020).

In the Central African Republic, the number of IDPs dropped marginally from 670 000 by the end of 2019 to 659 000 by 30 June 2020 (UNHCR, September 2020). However the number rose significantly in Mozambique. By 31 August 2020, there were 309 000 compared to 180 500 by the end of 2019 (UNHCR, June and September, 2020).

Nutrition

Though the effects of COVID-19 on malnutrition are not yet fully known, it is likely that the deepest impact will not be from the pathology itself, but primarily from the impact on food access, provision of health services and changes in practices and behaviour. Acute malnutrition across the region could increase by 25 percent or more over the remainder of 2020 and into 2021 (SADC, July 2020).

Southern Africa continues to be the region most affected by HIV, with approximately 20.7 million people living with HIV with women and adolescent girls being the most affected by the epidemic. During emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic, HIV-related risks and vulnerabilities may be increased due to the loss of livelihoods; disruption of health services, family and social networks (SADC, July 2020).

West Africa and the Sahel, and Cameroon

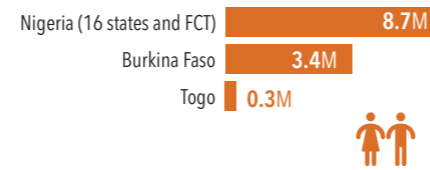
Benin Burkina Faso Cabo Verde Cameroon Chad Côte d'Ivoire Gambia Ghana Guinea Guinea-Bissau Liberia Mali Mauritania Niger Nigeria Senegal Sierra Leone Togo



- Food insecurity across many countries was already deteriorating prior to COVID-19, as escalating conflicts in northern Nigeria/Lake Chad Basin, Cameroon and the Central Sahel disrupted livelihoods, further increased displacement and limited food assistance.
- IDPs in conflict-affected, inaccessible areas face extremely limited access to food. Conflict continued to drive people from their homes, particularly in Burkina Faso.
- COVID-19 decreased income, drove up poverty, disrupted regional trade, supply chains and cross-border pastoralist activities, and inflated food prices in the Sahel (Burkina Faso, Chad, the Niger and Nigeria) and some coastal countries (Sierra Leone and Liberia).
- Torrential rains and floods affected multiple countries in the region.
- Falling oil prices have affected government response capacity in several countries including Cameroon, Chad, the Gambia and Nigeria.
- The number of acutely malnourished children in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger and Senegal increased from an estimated 4.5 million in January to almost 5.4 million by July.

In times of COVID-19

Figure 13
Number of people in CH Phase 3 or above, in 2020

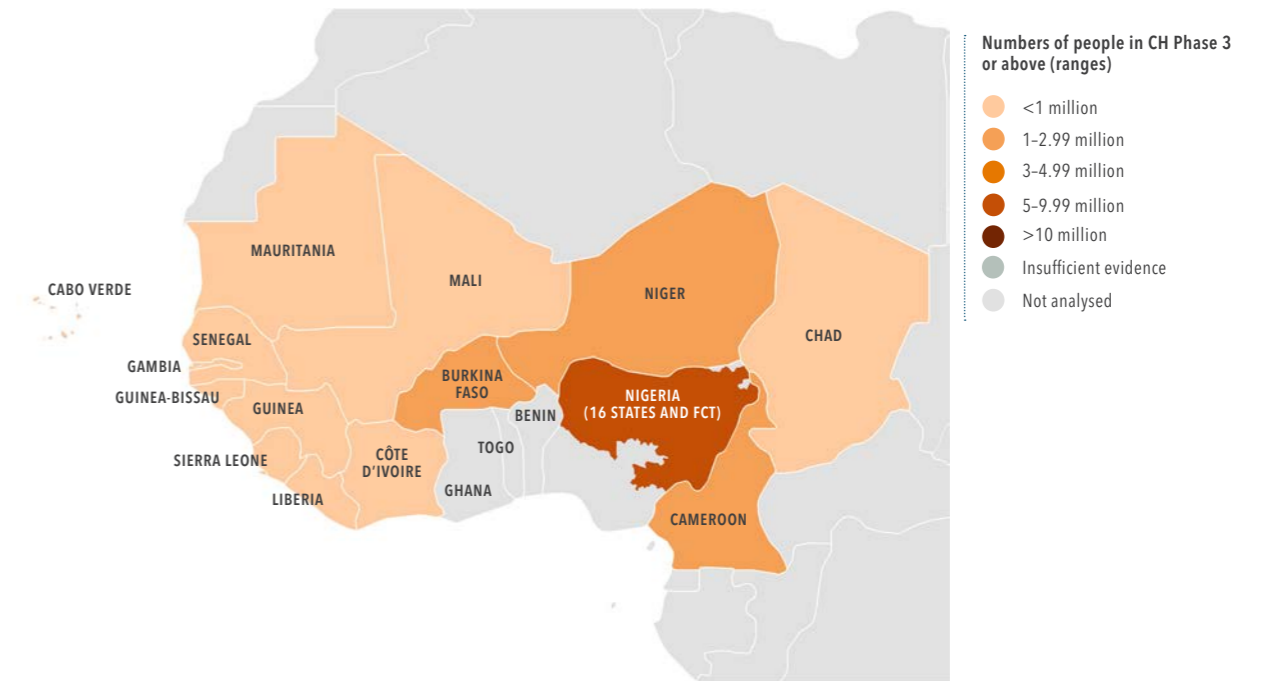


Source: CILSS-Cadre Harmonisé.

Note: CILSS-Cadre Harmonisé analyses for 15 of the 18 countries in the region are still ongoing in times of COVID-19.

Map 5

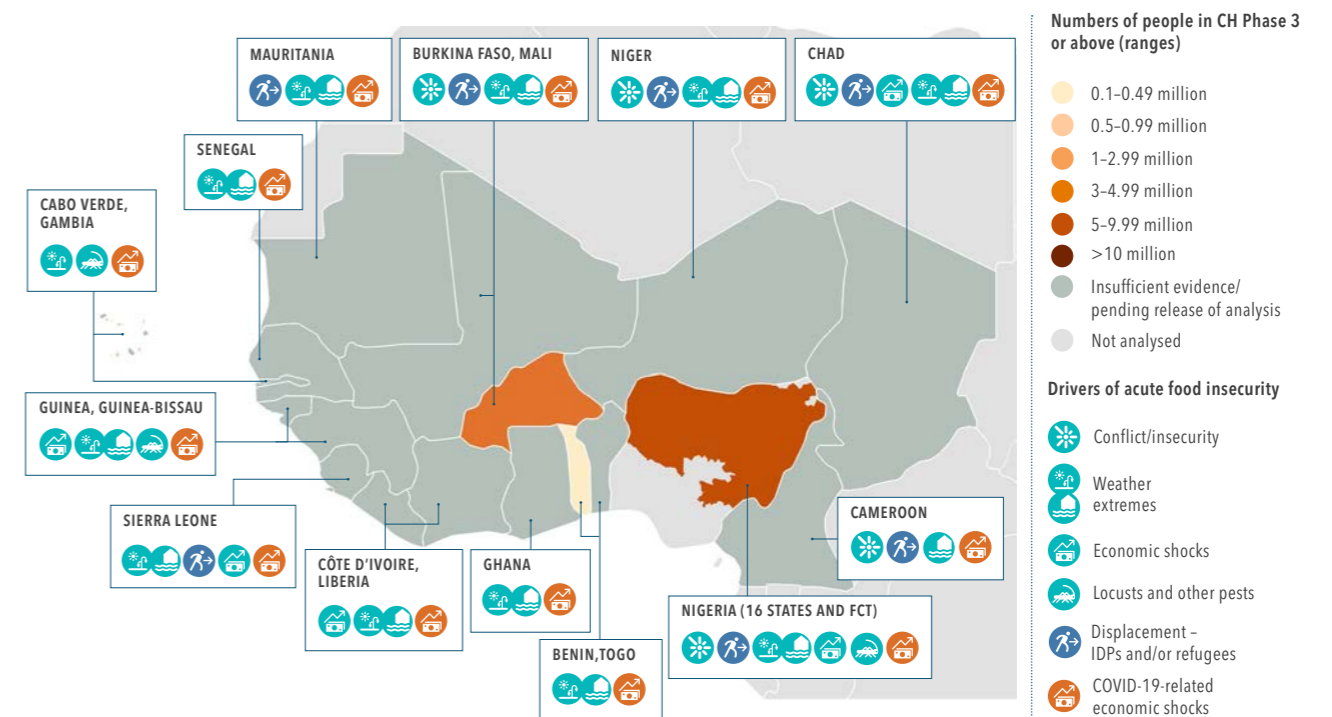
West Africa and the Sahel, and Cameroon, acute food insecurity at peak point in 2019



Source: FSIN, GRFC 2020. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Map 6

West Africa and the Sahel, and Cameroon, acute food insecurity estimates and drivers in 2020 in times of COVID-19



Source: FSIN, GRFC 2020 September update. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Country updates



Nigeria (16 states and Federal Capital Territory)

The COVID-19 pandemic is further exacerbating an already dire food and nutrition-insecurity situation in north-eastern Nigeria with over 5.7 million people facing Crisis or worse (CH Phase 3 and above) levels of acute food insecurity in the four conflict-affected north-eastern and north central states of Adamawa, Borno, Kano and Yobe from June–August 2020. Of these, almost 0.7 million people were classified in Emergency (CH Phase 4). Additionally, around 11.1 million people were classified in Stressed (CH Phase 2) in the four states.

The updated analysis does not cover other areas of northern Nigeria. However, using the original pre-COVID-19 March forecast with the July update for the four north-eastern states gives an overall number of 8.7 million in Crisis or worse (CH Phase 3 or above) in the 16 states of northern Nigeria and the Federal Capital Territory from June–August 2020. This represents a 73 percent increase compared to the peak number during the 2019 lean season. A further 23.4 million people were classified in Stressed (CH Phase 2) from June–August 2020.

IDPs in camps in inaccessible areas near the Lake Chad basin face extremely limited access to food. Displaced households

8.7M CH Phase 3 or above
in June–August 2020 (8% of population analysed)

8.0M CH Phase 3 Crisis **0.7M** CH Phase 4 Emergency

23.4M CH Phase 2 Stressed

Source: CILSS/Cadre Harmonisé Technical Working Group, July 2020.

in the north-west, insecurity and conflict-affected areas are also extremely vulnerable as they are dependent on atypical livelihood activities that have been further disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Burkina Faso

In Burkina Faso, a record high of 3.4 million people were facing Crisis or worse (CH Phase 3 or above) acute food insecurity conditions from June–August 2020. This figure includes over 0.5 million in Emergency (CH Phase 4) and 11 000 in Catastrophe (CH Phase 5). This is almost triple the 2019 peak number of people (1.2 million) estimated to be in Crisis or worse (CH Phase 3 or above) from October–December 2019 in the GRFC 2020 and more than three times the number for the 2019 June–August lean period (0.7 million).

Cumulative rainfall since 1 April was favourable, benefitting crop growth, but further deterioration in security conditions since the COVID-19 outbreak disrupted agricultural activities, especially around the northern and eastern borders, and continued to drive up population displacements (FEWS NET, May 2020). The number of IDPs almost doubled between late 2019 and mid-2020 to more than one million (UNHCR, August 2020).

3.4M CH Phase 3 or above
in June–August 2020 (16% of population analysed)

2.9M CH Phase 3 Crisis **0.5M** CH Phase 4 Emergency **11 000** CH Phase 5 Catastrophe

5.3M CH Phase 2 Stressed

Source: CILSS/Cadre Harmonisé Technical Working Group, July 2020.

Togo

Togo usually faces Minimal (CH Phase 1) levels of acute food insecurity and has never before been included in the GRFC, but the negative impacts of COVID-19 containment measures have resulted in close to 300 000 people being classified in Crisis or worse (CH Phase 3 or above) levels of acute food insecurity from June–August 2020.

Eighteen areas were reclassified from Minimal (CH Phase 1) in the March projections for the June–August lean period to Stressed (CH Phase 2) in the July projections (CILSS, July 2020). Keran, in north-eastern Togo, faced the most marked deterioration from Minimal (CH Phase 1) to Crisis (CH Phase 3).

Although July was marked by a continued easing of containment measures and movement restrictions across most of the country (CILSS, July 2020), the state of health emergency, including city closures, was extended until mid-September (Togo First, August 2020). Income-generating activities remained limited, very limited or absent in 40 percent of areas as of July (CILSS, July 2020). Cross-border and intra-country transhumance was affected by containment measures as well as by worsening insecurity in bordering Burkina Faso (CILSS, May 2020).

0.28M CH Phase 3 or above
in June–August 2020 (5% of population analysed)

0.28M CH Phase 3 Crisis

1.3M CH Phase 2 Stressed

Source: CILSS/Cadre Harmonisé Technical Working Group, July 2020.

Drivers of acute food insecurity in mid-2020

Conflict/insecurity

Conflict/insecurity remains the primary driver of acute food insecurity across the region as intensifying armed conflict and violence affect vast areas, uprooting increasing numbers of people from their homes, disrupting livelihoods and food production and limiting humanitarian food assistance distributions (OCHA, May 2020).

The security situation in the border areas of Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger continued to escalate. In Mali, there was a sharp increase in violent incidents spilling over into Burkina Faso and western areas of the Niger (OCHA, May 2020). Halfway through 2020, the number of reported fatalities in Burkina Faso, Mali, and the Niger had either neared or surpassed the full total for each country in 2019 (ACLED, August 2020). In Burkina Faso the worsening security situation has forced more than one million people to flee their homes, and many have been displaced several times (OCHA, August 2020).

The armed conflict in the Lake Chad Basin showed no signs of abating with large areas of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states in north-eastern Nigeria outside of government control. Incursions and violent incidents in neighbouring Cameroon, Chad and the Niger, remained common, triggering new populations displacements (OCHA, May 2020). The security situation deteriorated in the Niger's Diffa, Tillabéry, Tahoua, and Maradi regions with the northern regions of Tillabéry and Tahoua most affected (FEWS NET July 2020).

Cameroon's Far North region continued to be affected by armed conflict, which drove displacement and disrupted livelihoods and basic services. The socio-political crisis in the North West and South West regions became increasingly violent with hundreds of thousands of people internally displaced as a result (OCHA, June 2020).

Growing insecurity across Nigeria's arid North West has driven increasing numbers of Nigerian refugees into the Niger's Maradi region (UNHCR, June 2020). The situation gave cause for concern that the instability in Liptako-Gourma and the Lake Chad Basin areas could become entangled (UNHCR, February 2020).

Beyond armed conflict, Mali experienced a socio-political crisis amid a series of mass demonstrations against the Government (ACLED, August 2020).

Weather extremes

Agricultural activities in the region were proceeding on time and without major hindrances thanks to good rainfall. (FEWS NET, July 2020). Parts of Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Liberia experienced below-average rainfall, which drastically increased the moisture deficit in the region, while parts of Mali and the Niger experienced heavy rainfall and flooding in July and early August. The heavy rainfalls and floods hit several refugee-hosting areas, especially in Nigeria and the Sahel, posing an additional challenge to the implementation of preventive measures against COVID-19 (UNHCR, August 2020).

From July–September, heavy rains in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Ghana, Mali, the Niger, northern Nigeria and Senegal, led to devastating floods that killed dozens, displaced thousands, destroyed houses, crops and infrastructure, inundated farmland and washed away livestock (OCHA, September 2020).

While the desert locust threat to the region had reportedly subsided in mid-2020, local populations of scattered adults were expected to increase across Chad, Mali, Mauritania and the Niger during August and September (FAO, August 2020).

Economic shocks

Pre COVID-19, the economic environment was already deteriorating with inflation and local currency depreciation severely affecting households' access to food and nutrition in the Gambia, Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. Declines in international cotton prices and a sharp fall in global oil prices heavily affected the countries that export these commodities (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Nigeria and Togo for cotton and mainly Cameroon, Chad and Nigeria for oil). Major food commodity prices have risen in almost all countries. For countries largely dependent on imports for food and agricultural inputs, such as Liberia, currency depreciation is particularly concerning. The increase in the price of imported products was transmitted to local products (WFP, June 2020). In Liberia and some areas of Mali, Mauritania and Nigeria, food prices were more than 50 percent higher than the 5-year average (RPCA-CILSS, June 2020).

COVID-19-related economic impacts

By mid-2020, most states were gradually lifting the restrictive measures initially adopted in an attempt to mitigate the social tension and economic slowdown they triggered (UNHCR, August 2020). In Burkina Faso, where tensions arose from the closure of markets, the measure was lifted after five weeks. A curfew declared by the Malian government was met by demonstrations and lifted after six weeks (ACLED, August 2020).

Loss of income

Despite the gradual resumption of economic activities as COVID-19 restrictions were eased, the implementation of usual livelihood activities by most poor urban households was still below-normal in mid-2020. Border closures continued to stall migrant agricultural labour and reduce income for poor households. Social distancing measures continued to negatively affect demand (FEWS NET, July 2020).

Although mobility restrictions were instrumental in limiting the spread of the virus, they had devastating repercussions on livelihoods in a region where 60 percent of the economy is informal (IOM, June 2020). Containment measures were expected to be particularly felt in urban and periurban areas, where most people rely on daily work, casual labour, petty trade and food vending activities (FAO-GIEWS, July 2020).

IOM estimated that at least 33 000 migrants – including seasonal migrant workers working in agriculture or gold-mining – were stranded at borders including in overcrowded transit centres as a result of COVID-19 mobility restrictions, most of them having lost their jobs or incomes (IOM, June 2020).

Due to the pandemic's economic fallout in Europe and the US, remittance flows to sub-Saharan Africa are expected to drop by over 23 percent in 2020 (WB, July 2020). Several countries in the region, such as Cabo Verde, the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Nigeria and Senegal are heavily reliant on remittance income. In countries such as Cabo Verde, unemployment rates are also rising as a result of job losses in tourism, hospitality and food systems (FAO, July 2020).

Disrupted regional trade and supply chains

Even before COVID-19, the closure of the land borders with Nigeria due to the conflict in the Lake Chad Basin was disrupting regional trade (FEWS NET, July 2020).

COVID-19-related restrictions (market closures, restrictions on internal and cross-border movements) limited access to markets and affected access to food and to agricultural inputs during the growing season, especially in Chad, Nigeria and Senegal. In the Niger, border closures and travel restrictions limited exports of livestock and cash crops to Nigeria (FEWS NET, June 2020). In Burkina Faso, restrictive measures disrupted trade of market garden products between producing areas and urban centres, leaving producer households with less money to buy food during the lean season. Closed borders prevented seasonal migration to coastal countries (FEWS NET, June 2020).

Figure 14

The COVID-19 crisis timeline in West Africa and the Sahel, and Cameroon



Figure 15
Economic indicators (2019 estimates and 2020 forecasts)

Countries	Real GDP growth at constant market prices (percent)		Inflation - Consumer Price Index (percent)	
	2019 e	2020 f	2019 e	2020 f
Benin	6.7	3.2	-0.9	-0.6
Burkina Faso	5.7	2.0	-3.2	3.2
Cabo Verde	5.7	-5.5	1.1	1.3
Cameroon	3.9	-0.2	2.5	2.5
Chad	3.2	-0.2	-1.0	2.2
Côte d'Ivoire	7.3	2.6	0.8	2.0
Gambia	6.0	2.5	7.1	6.7
Ghana	6.5	1.5	7.9	9.9
Guinea	5.6	2.1	9.5	8.9
Guinea-Bissau	4.7	-1.6	0.5	1.1
Liberia	-2.3	-2.6	27.0	19.3
Mali	5.0	0.9	-0.4	0.6
Mauritania	5.9	-2.0	2.2	3.7
Niger	5.8	1.0	-2.5	1.4
Nigeria	2.2	-3.2	11.4	13.8
Senegal	5.3	1.3	1.0	2.0
Sierra Leone	5.1	-2.3		
Togo	5.3	1.0	0.7	3.3

e = estimate f = forecast

Source: WB, 2020.

Despite the gradual resumption of economic activities, prices of coarse grains increased in most markets in June due to movement restrictions and limited trade flows (FEWS NET, June and July 2020).

As a result of two years of good domestic harvests, markets were generally supplied sufficiently in coarse grain and functioning at acceptable levels, except in Chad, Guinea, northern Nigeria, Senegal and Sierra Leone. Disruptions to agricultural inputs were mainly forecast to affect crop prospects in areas affected by insecurity – the Lake Chad Basin, the Liptako Gourma region and the Tibesti region in Chad (FEWS NET, July 2020). In Liberia, an acute shortage of fertilizers caused by restrictions hampered domestic crop production (FAO & WFP, July 2020).

In Cabo Verde, farmers faced a COVID-19-related shortage of seeds for cereal crops, and reduced agricultural workforce. Unemployment rates are rising as a result of job losses in tourism, hospitality and food systems (FAO, July 2020).

Constrained government finances

The negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on international trade through reduced demand from China and the rest of the world (agriculture, extractive industry and tourism), is expected to have a serious economic impact

Additional challenges for pastoralists

In 2020, pastoralists in the region faced a long and difficult lean season. Besides high levels of insecurity, theft and banditry, lack of fodder (especially in Chad, southern Mauritania, the Niger and Senegal) and, in some areas, late onset of seasonal rains, they grappled with the closure of borders due to the COVID-19 restrictions. Despite a relaxation of containment measures, transhumance was prohibited in most of the Niger and largely disrupted in Burkina Faso, Ghana (most of the territory), Mauritania, Nigeria (mainly in the states of Benue, Niger and Plateau) and Senegal in mid-2020. This led to a concentration of livestock in accessible areas, especially in border areas, such as northern Côte d'Ivoire, southern Mauritania and southern Niger, particularly along the border with Benin and Nigeria (CILSS, July 2020).

This exerted greater pressure on host communities, degrading pasture and water resources, and intensifying the risk of conflicts, especially in border areas. Poor physical condition of animals and lower milk production, coupled with a decrease in demand and trade, lowered pastoralists' income at a time when food prices tended to be higher. Poor pastoral households had to sell excessive numbers of livestock including breeding females (FEWS NET, August 2020).

across the sub-region (see figure 15). Tighter credit conditions, weaker growth, and the diversion of government resources to shore up health care systems and fight the outbreak reduces funds available for key development priorities. An economic slump will set back the fight against extreme poverty (WFP, March 2020).

As a result of the pandemic, growth in the region, which was poised to expand by 4 percent in 2020, following growth of 3.6 percent in 2019, is now projected to contract by 2 percent in 2020, and could fall by 4.3 percent in a worst-case scenario. Countries that depend on oil and tourism for foreign exchange and fiscal revenues will especially face reduced fiscal space and heightened external account imbalances, stoking a build-up of public debt (AfDB, July 2020).

Deepening inequalities

During crises, women are the first to sacrifice themselves in order for the children and old people to eat first and they are the first ones to limit their food rations. Girls are often at a disadvantage to get food for the benefit of boys (Oxfam, July 2020). According to a Rapid Gender Analysis in the BAY states of north-eastern Nigeria in May, COVID-19 is amplifying deeply entrenched gender inequalities. The alarming financial



challenge posed by loss of income is potentially affecting the current and future livelihoods of vulnerable households, especially those headed by women as well as persons with disability (CARE, UN WOMEN & OXFAM, June 2020).

Displacement update

In 2019, there was already a sharp rise in forced displacement across the region with the number of IDPs reaching 4.3 million by the end of the year mainly due to the rapidly deteriorating situation in Burkina Faso and western areas of the Niger (UNHCR, February 2020). Despite the COVID-19-induced restrictions on movement and border closures this alarming trend has accelerated drastically in 2020.

There has been a particularly worrying rise in the number of displaced people in the central Sahel region where humanitarian access to them is difficult, especially in the border triangle between Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger. The number of displaced people in Burkina Faso reached 1 million by August 2020 (UNHCR, August 2020).

Nutrition update

With escalating population displacements and COVID-19 drastically limiting access to basic services, child malnutrition is expected to increase to unprecedented levels. A mid-year analysis of the combined impact of food insecurity

and COVID-19 on acute malnutrition in 19 countries¹ in West and Central Africa estimated that 15.4 million children under 5 years old would be affected by wasting in 2020, a 20 percent increase from January estimates. One third of them were expected to be severely wasted (UNICEF & WFP, May 2020). The number of acutely malnourished children across six Sahel countries – Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger and Senegal – increased from an estimated 4.5 million in January to almost 5.4 million by July (UNICEF & WFP, July 2020).

An IPC acute malnutrition analysis indicated a deteriorating situation in Burkina Faso between April and June with further concerns beyond August. Half of the 29 provinces were classed in Serious (IPC Phase 3) and Critical (IPC Phase 4) (IPC AMN, June 2020).

Besides increased household food insecurity, poor maternal nutrition and infant feeding practices, high levels of childhood illnesses and water-borne diseases, fragile health systems, poor access to clean water and sanitation, and chronic poverty threaten the nutritional status of children under 5 in the region. The COVID-19 pandemic has made it even more difficult for populations to maintain healthy diets and optimal infant and young child feeding practices, and hindered their access to essential nutrition services.

¹ Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Republic of Congo, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo.

Latin America and the Caribbean

Bolivia (Plurinational State of) Colombia Cuba Dominican Republic Ecuador El Salvador Guatemala Haiti Honduras Nicaragua Peru Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) small island developing states in the Caribbean

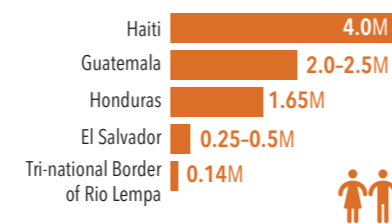


- Across the region, economic shocks, extreme weather events, displacement and insecurity had taken a heavy toll before COVID-19.
- The economic effects of the pandemic could result in the region's worst recession in a century, with a forecast 9.1 percent contraction in regional GDP in 2020, and a rise in unemployment to 13.5 percent.
- This could push the number of poor up by 45 million to 230 million and the number of extremely poor up by 28 million to 96 million. The plight of large numbers of informal sector workers is particularly worrying. Women have been disproportionately affected.
- Of great concern are vulnerable people in the Central American Dry Corridor and Haiti, where many households rely on remittances, which are expected to decline in 2020.
- The Venezuelan migrant crisis persisted, with around 4.3 million displaced in the region, mainly in Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, where nearly 3 in 4 experienced a COVID-19-related drop in income.
- The highly active 2020 Atlantic hurricane season has progressed at record-setting pace, but, with two months still to go, storm impacts have been less than 2019.

In times of COVID-19

Figure 16

Number of people in IPC Phase 3 or above, in 2020



Source: IPC and FEWS NET.

Map 7

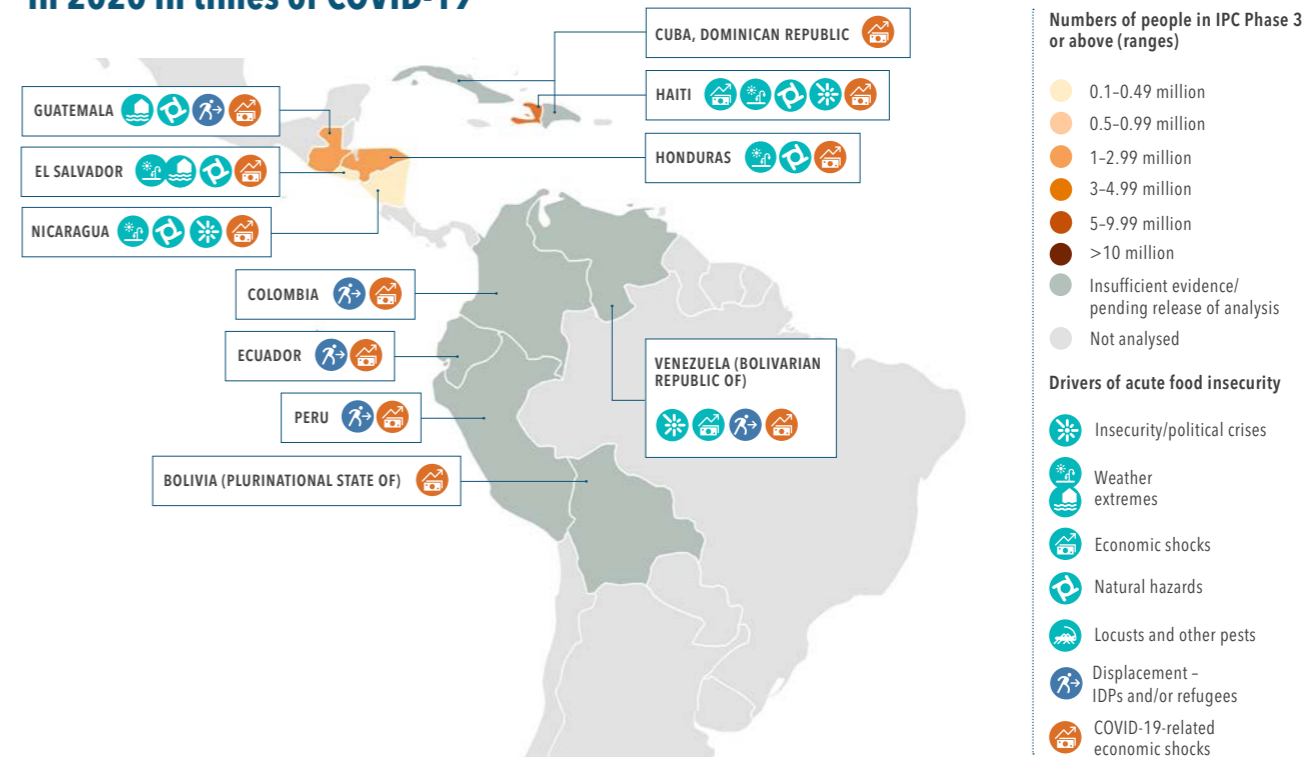
Latin America and the Caribbean, acute food insecurity at peak point in 2019



Source: FSIN, GRFC 2020. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Map 8

Latin America and the Caribbean, acute food insecurity estimates and drivers in 2020 in times of COVID-19



Source: FSIN, GRFC 2020 September update. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Country updates



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Haiti

The acute food security situation in Haiti in mid-2020 is extremely concerning. Economic decline, characterized by high food prices, low income and high levels of unemployment, has been amplified by the impact of COVID-19 restrictions, while below-average rainfall has diminished main season harvests.

Around 4 million people, or 42 percent of the analysed population, were facing high levels of acute food insecurity requiring urgent action from August 2020–February 2021. This marks a 0.32 million increase since the 2019 peak and includes over 900 000 classified in Emergency (IPC Phase 4). The number in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) was forecast to increase to around 4.4 million from March–June 2021, unless action is taken to address the drivers.

Cité Soleil, La Gonâve, the North-West, the South-East and the coastal areas of the South have the highest percentage of people in Emergency (IPC Phase 4). These households have suffered an extreme loss of livelihood assets resulting in a high level of short-term food consumption deficits and very high rates of acute malnutrition. In La Gonâve, the North-West, the North and very poor neighbourhoods of Cité Soleil, one in two people is in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) (IPC, September 2020).

4.0M IPC Phase 3 or above
in August–February 2021 (42% of population analysed)

3.1M **0.9M**
IPC Phase 3 **Crisis** IPC Phase 4 **Emergency**

3.0M IPC Phase 2 **Stressed**

Source: Haiti IPC Technical Working Group, September 2020.

Preliminary SMART findings indicate a deterioration of the situation with 6.0 percent of children under 5 years old affected by acute malnutrition (GAM). At the departmental level, the percentage of children affected by severe acute malnutrition ranges from zero–1.3 percent. The situation is particularly concerning in the metropolitan area of Port-au-Prince, where 6.5 percent of children under 5 years are acutely malnourished, 2.5 percent severely so (FEWS NET, June 2020).

Guatemala

From July–September 2020, 2-2.5 million people were expected to be acutely food insecure and in need of urgent assistance. The poor and poorest households, particularly in rural areas, faced difficulties in securing basic food as COVID-19 related restrictions and persistent lack of transport made it difficult for them to travel to seek employment opportunities and access municipal markets. In urban areas, poor households dependent on the informal economy or service sectors had still not been able to recover their

2.0–2.5M IPC Phase 3 or above
in July–September 2020

Source: FEWS NET IPC-compatible analysis.

traditional sources of income by August due to restrictions that only allowed a partial reactivation of economic activities. They also faced high transport costs and increased food prices. (FEWS NET, August 2020).

Honduras

During the lean season from June–August 2020, 1.6 million people were expected to be in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above), representing 32 percent of the analysed population. Of these, around 350 000 were classified in Emergency (IPC Phase 4). This represents a 71 percent increase since November 2019 when 964 000 people were classified in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above), accounting for 19 percent of the analysed population. In all 13 departments people mainly derive their incomes from subsistence farming, cultivation of fodder crops and coffee, or tourism, remittances and other non-agricultural work (IPC, July 2020).

1.65M IPC Phase 3 or above
in June–August 2020 (32% of population analysed)

1.3M **0.35M**
IPC Phase 3 **Crisis** IPC Phase 4 **Emergency**

1.9M IPC Phase 2 **Stressed**

Source: Honduras IPC Technical Working Group, July 2020.

El Salvador

Between 250 000 and 500 000 people were in need of urgent food assistance from May–August 2020 as the COVID-19 crisis caused the loss of formal and informal employment in rural and urban areas, and decreased income from remittances. At the same time the price of basic goods increased. Besides the poorest urban households that depend on the informal economy, rural ones in the Salvadoran coffee zone are of concern, due to the deterioration of their livelihoods (FEWS NET May and September 2020).

0.25–0.5M IPC Phase 3 or above
in May–August 2020 (4–8% of population analysed)

Source: FEWS NET IPC-compatible analysis.

Tri-national Border of Rio Lempa

During the lean season, around 140 000 people were classified in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) in Cayaguana, Chorti, Guija and Ocotopeque micro regions of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. Of these, close to 19 500 people were in Emergency (IPC Phase 4). COVID-19-related reduced income, loss of employment and reduced remittances were the main drivers. The incidence of acute malnutrition in children under 5 years in the municipalities of Guatemala doubled by comparison with previous years, associated with the low availability and access to food, and limited access to health services (IPC, June 2020).

0.14M IPC Phase 3 or above
in June–August 2020 (29% of population analysed)

0.12M **19 500**
IPC Phase 3 **Crisis** IPC Phase 4 **Emergency**

0.17M IPC Phase 2 **Stressed**

Source: El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras IPC Technical Working Groups, June 2020.

Drivers of acute food insecurity in mid-2020

Weather extremes and pests

In Haiti, below-average and erratic rainfall slowed agricultural activities and crop development from late March, except in areas with irrigation systems. The country has faced two consecutive years of low rainfall, with 2020 conditions similar to those of 2019, when drought caused production to decline by an estimated 12 percent. In some areas affected by water shortages, livestock body conditions deteriorated, and some animal deaths were reported, such as in Grand'Anse. Harvests were delayed in some areas (FEWS NET, June 2020). Rainfall deficits and higher production costs underpinned by currency depreciation, pointed to below-average aggregate output (FAO-GIEWS, July 2020). Hurricane Laura, the first major hurricane of the 2020 Atlantic hurricane season hit Haiti as a tropical storm on 23 August, causing heavy rain, strong gusts of winds and dangerous sea conditions, killing 31 people (IFRC, September 2020).

In Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, rainfall was scarce during land preparation, but significantly increased in May (FAO-GIEWS, July 2020). Between May and June, the storms Amanda and Cristóbal brought above-average rainfall to El Salvador, southern Honduras, the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua and some areas of Guatemala. In El Salvador, 11 percent of the total area planted with maize was lost (FEWS NET, June 2020), necessitating some replanting. Production levels were however supported by high domestic cereal prices, which encouraged farmers to increase planted areas (FAO-GIEWS, July 2020). The reduced 2019 harvest and consecutive years of poor basic grain and coffee harvests brought an early start to the lean season in Honduras' dry corridor areas and some parts of El Salvador. This resulted in the erosion of livelihoods, reduction of assets

and purchasing power for already vulnerable households (FEWS NET, July 2020).

In Colombia and Peru, where the harvest of the 2020 main season paddy crop is ongoing, above-average outputs are anticipated, mainly due to large sowings and good yields, respectively (FAO-GIEWS, September 2020).

In late July, Hurricane Isaias passed through the Bahamas, the Turks and Caicos Islands, the Dominican Republic and northern Haiti, with only limited damages to houses and crops.

Localized outbreaks of locusts were reported in mid-June in eastern Argentina (FAO-GIEWS, June 2020), in northern Guatemala, central and eastern El Salvador as abundant rainfall and high temperatures created conducive conditions for pest infestations. However, the outbreak was successfully contained and no major crop losses were reported (FAO-GIEWS, September 2020). In early July, locust outbreaks were also reported in localized areas of Guatemala and Mexico, with no significant damages to crops (FEWS NET, July 2020).

Despite a timely onset of seasonal rains, production levels were unfavourable in Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and likely to continue decreasing as acute scarcity of agricultural inputs and fuel constrained yields (FAO-GIEWS, July 2020).

Economic shocks

When the pandemic hit the region, its economies were already experiencing serious difficulties. In the preceding six years (2014–2019), economic growth had been the lowest (0.4 percent) recorded in the region since 1951. In Latin America, fiscal space contracted and public debt increased,

from about 30 percent of GDP in 2009–2011 to over 45 percent in 2019 (UN, July 2020).

The situation in Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) remained critical after six years of economic contraction, inflation including periods of hyperinflation (IMF, April 2020), and declining household income, savings, purchasing power and access to public services.

According to the 2019–2020 National Survey of Living Conditions for Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), the poverty rate has reached 96 percent, with 79 percent in extreme poverty and unable to purchase a basic food basket. Even with cash and asset transfers, subsidies for basic services and goods, and minimal tax burdens, multidimensional poverty affects around 65 percent of Venezuelans mainly due to falling income and rising unemployment. According to IOM estimates, about 2.7 million people left the country from 2017–2019, chiefly in search of work (ENCOVI, July 2020).

Since 2019, the country has experienced rapid growth of transactional dollarization, which has benefited parts of the economy, but may be leading to growing inequality between those who have access to foreign currency and those who do not (OCHA, July 2020).

In Haiti, currency depreciation continued to trigger high prices of food, agricultural inputs and fuel, and to limit access to food for the most vulnerable, which triggered protests and aggravated insecurity in July (FEWS NET, July 2020).

As a result of a series of external shocks, compounded by structural weaknesses and vulnerabilities and high exposure to natural disasters and the impacts of climate change, some Caribbean SIDS are among the most indebted economies in the world. The average debt was 68.5 percent of GDP in 2019. Even though most of its countries are classified as middle-income, the region's income inequality implies that a large share of the population is poor or highly vulnerable to falling into poverty (UN policy brief, July 2020).

Figure 18
Economic indicators (2019 estimates and 2020 forecasts)

Countries	Real GDP growth at constant market prices (percent)		Inflation - Consumer Price Index (percent)	
	2019 e	2020 f	2019 e	2020 f
Brazil	1.1	-8.0	3.7	3.4
Chile	1.1	-4.3	2.6	2.9
Colombia	3.3	-4.9	3.5	3.3
Ecuador	0.1	-7.4	0.3	0.0
El Salvador	2.4	-5.4	0.1	0.0
Guatemala	3.6	-3.0	3.7	2.8
Haiti	-0.9	-3.5	19.5	-
Honduras	2.7	-5.8	4.4	4.0
Mexico	-0.1	-7.5	3.9	3.5
Nicaragua	-3.9	-6.3	5.4	2.9
Peru	2.2	-12.0	1.2	1.8

* No data available for Cuba and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
e = estimate f = forecast

Source: WB Macro Poverty Outlook, June 2020.

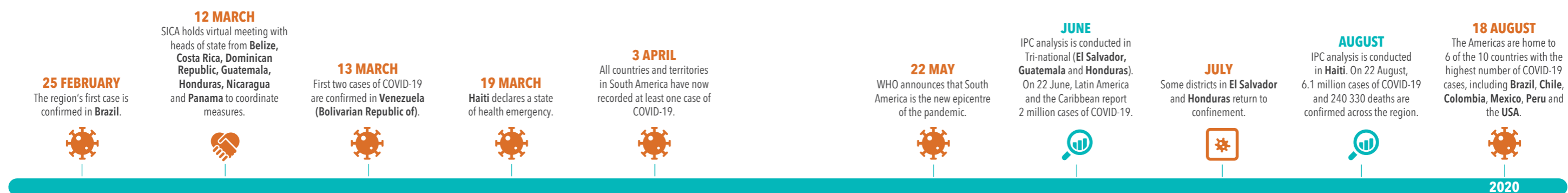
COVID-19-related economic impacts

Parts of Latin America and the Caribbean became hotspots of the COVID-19 pandemic, exacerbated by weak social protection, fragmented health systems and profound inequalities (UN policy brief, July 2020).

The dynamics of contagion are also influenced by the high degree of urbanization – more than a third of the population live in cities with a million or more inhabitants – and the accumulated deficits in terms of overcrowding, lack of water and sanitation services, and crowded public transportation (UN policy brief, July 2020).

Much of Latin America has been locked down since mid-March, when the first few cases were confirmed, with some countries, like Colombia, only lifting nationwide restrictions at the start of September. The region has seen some of the

Figure 17 The COVID-19 crisis timeline in Latin America and the Caribbean



longest lockdowns in the world, with citizens in many cities advised to leave their homes only when absolutely necessary.

Countries such as Argentina, Chile and Peru imposed far swifter and more comprehensive containment measures than others, including Brazil, Mexico and Nicaragua (LSE, August 2020).

Loss of income

Lockdowns, movement restrictions and social distancing measures to mitigate the pandemic triggered a slowdown in economic activity and hit low-paid and informal workers in the service sector particularly hard. More than half of workers are employed in the informal economy across the region. Over 60 percent of vulnerable informal workers do not have access to any kind of social protection (OECD, April 2020). Many have limited savings to cope with periods of inactivity and/or lack access to income substitution mechanisms, such as unemployment insurance (UN policy brief, July 2020).

Remittances are a particularly important source of income in Central America and many Caribbean islands. For instance, in Haiti, they accounted for 38.5 percent of GDP in 2019, Honduras, 21.5 percent, El Salvador, 20.9 percent, Guatemala, 13.9 percent and Nicaragua, 13.2 percent (WB, 2020). Remittance-dependent households were expected to face a steep drop in income, particularly in El Salvador and Honduras.

In Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), unemployment rates were estimated to have increased by around 7 percentage points at the national level and by over 10 percentage points in Caracas in 2020 compared to the pre-COVID-19 situation. Around 43 percent of households reported an impossibility of working or loss of income (UCAB-IIES, 2020).

In Haiti, the impacts of COVID-19 mitigation measures include: fewer sources of income, high food prices and a subsequent reduction in household purchasing power (IPC, August, 2020). The reduced harvest prospects in tandem with diminished incomes of the wealthiest households since the start of the pandemic, depressed the demand for agricultural labour. This situation was compounded by an increase in labour supply following the closure of the border with the Dominican Republic and an influx of returnees in bordering areas (FEWS NET, June 2020). With the partial reopening of the border and airports, economic activities resumed and fostered an increase in job opportunities, particularly in urban centres, by July (FEWS NET, July 2020).

In El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, the impact of the lean season was also exacerbated by reduced income opportunities and purchasing power, particularly in the dry corridor areas, such as in Guatemala (FEWS NET, June 2020). Following the pandemic outbreak, the slight recovery of economic activity reported in July was insufficient

for rural and urban households to fully recover their access to food, especially for informal labourers (FEWS NET, July 2020), who represent 70 percent of the working population in Guatemala, for instance (FEWS NET, June 2020).

In Brazil, the local lockdown measures meant that a substantial proportion of Brazilians, often the poorest, lost their livelihoods, particularly the informally employed who account for 40 percent of the workforce (CIRAD, April 2020).

Deepening inequalities

Latin America was already the most unequal region in the world in terms of income inequality according to ECLAC.

Inequality in the region positions certain groups in a particularly vulnerable situation, including older persons (85 million), indigenous peoples (60 million), people of African descent (130 million in 2015), people with disabilities (70 million) and migrants (ECLAC & PAHO, July 2020).

Women have been disproportionately affected. Largely employed in the informal and hardest-hit sectors, their ability to absorb economic shocks is less, while they have also taken on greater care demands at home as well as being more exposed to increased violence in a region with already-high rates of gender-based violence (UN policy brief, July 2020).

Constrained government finances

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)¹ estimates that COVID-19 will result in the worst recession in the region in a century, with a 9.1 percent contraction in regional GDP in 2020, along with a rise in unemployment to 13.5 percent. This could push the number of poor up by 45 million to a total of 230 million and the number of extremely poor up by 28 million to 96 million in total (ECLAC & PAHO, July 2020).

The slowdown in global demand affected exports, remittances, tourism and foreign direct investments to the region (FEWS NET, June 2020). Exports were expected to decline by 12 percent and remittances by around 20 percent. During the first four months of the year tourist arrivals fell by 35 percent in Central and South America, and 39 percent in the Caribbean (UN policy brief, July 2020).

In some Caribbean economies, tourism accounts for 50 to 90 percent of GDP and employment (IMF, June 2020). The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela's fiscal resources were further affected by the fall in international oil prices since March 2020 (OCHA, July 2020).

¹ The United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, known as ECLAC, UNECLAC is a United Nations regional commission to encourage economic cooperation. It includes 46 member States (20 in Latin America, 13 in the Caribbean and 13 from outside the region including Canada, Germany, the US and UK), and 13 associate members which are various non-independent territories, associated island countries and a commonwealth in the Caribbean.

Increasing food prices

Food prices spiked in March–April across most countries of Central America and the Caribbean, sustained by trade disruptions and panic buying following the introduction of restrictive measures to contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. As of June, rice prices were above their year-earlier average across South America after the upsurge in the first half of 2020. In Colombia, rice prices remained 40–50 percent above their June 2019 value as a result of rising demand in the previous months and currency depreciation. In Peru, prices were still 30 percent higher year-on-year, sustained by strong domestic and foreign demand (FAO GIEWS, July 2020).

The depreciation of the Haitian gourde, which lost 22 percent of its value against the USD between January and July 2020 (FEWS NET, July 2020), continued to affect food prices and access for the most vulnerable (FEWS NET, June 2020). In June, prices of most staples were well above their year-earlier levels across all monitored markets, with maize and black bean prices rising almost twice as high as their June 2019 levels in markets of Cap-Haitien and Port-au-Prince, respectively (FEWS NET, July 2020).

In El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, maize and bean prices were high in June after the previous year's drought-related losses and the reduced agricultural output, COVID-19 containment measures, speculation and panic buying (FAO-GIEWS, July 2020) as well as increased demand in the context of the pandemic (FEWS NET, June 2020).

Prices seasonally declined in July and August across the region as 2020 harvests increased market availabilities, except in Colombia and Peru where cereal prices remained well-above their levels of one year earlier (FAO-GIEWS, September 2020).

Insecurity/political crises

Negative social indicators continued to be aggravated by extremely high rates of homicide and gender-based violence. The region experienced a significant number of political crises and protests in 2019 and increasing inequalities, exclusion and discrimination in the context of COVID-19, sometimes leading to civil unrest (UN policy brief, July 2020).

Prolonged confinement triggered security issues, such as in Honduras where widespread protests were reported between mid-March and late July, mainly spurred by lack of access to food, as well as demands to return to work and demands for state assistance payments (OCHA, July 2020).

In Haiti, while the security situation improved as a result of movement restrictions up to June, it deteriorated in July in a context of fuel scarcity and related increases in transportation costs and food prices (BINUH, August 2020).

Displacement

At the end of 2019, UNHCR reported around 13.8 million people of concern in Latin America and the Caribbean. This included around 0.3 million refugees, 0.9 million asylum-seekers, 8.3 million IDPs (96 percent of them located in Colombia), and 3.2 million Venezuelans displaced abroad.

As of August 2020, about 5.2 million Venezuelans were estimated to be displaced as migrants and refugees, including 4.3 million in countries in the region (R4V, August 2020).

Despite mobility restrictions across much of the region, population movements continued in the first half of 2020 largely as a result of lack of employment opportunities and lack of legal status in destination countries (OCHA, July 2020). Between April and August, around 83 000 Venezuelans were known to have returned to their country after crossing over the border with Colombia. While some were returning from Colombia, others were coming back from as far away as Ecuador or even Peru (UNHCR, July 2020).

A survey of 959 Venezuelan migrants in Colombia, Ecuador and Peru found that 71 percent experienced a decrease in their income due to the COVID-19 outbreak, while 76 percent reported a general increase in food prices. At 30 percent, the share of migrants consuming only one meal or not eating at all during the day before the interview was 2.5 times higher than the pre-COVID-19 period (WFP, August 2020).

Nutrition

In Haiti, preliminary SMART findings indicate a deterioration of the situation with 6.0 percent of children under 5 years old affected by acute malnutrition (GAM). At the departmental level, the percentage of children affected by severe acute malnutrition (SAM) ranges from zero to 1.3 percent. The situation is as serious in the metropolitan area of Port-au-Prince, where there is 6.5 percent prevalence of GAM with 2.5 percent of children under 5 years severely acutely malnourished (FEWS NET, June 2020).

In Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), the National Survey of Living Conditions, ENCOVI 2020, reported 30 percent of children under 5 years of age were stunted in 2019 (UCAB-IIES, 2020). The National Institute of Nutrition estimated that 10.6 percent children under 5 years (284 591 children) were at risk of acute malnutrition in 2019. Of them, 4 percent (106 326 children) were affected by SAM (OCHA, July 2020).

Asia and the Pacific

Afghanistan Bangladesh Cambodia Demoratic People's Republic of Korea Indonesia Lao People's Democratic Republic Myanmar Nepal Pakistan Philippines Papua New Guinea Sri Lanka Vanuatu



- COVID-19 restrictions have aggravated the acute food insecurity situation of already vulnerable populations in the most food-insecure areas.
- New population groups in many countries have also become acutely food insecure as a result of income losses due to COVID-19-related economic impacts on multiple sectors, particularly tourism, manufacturing and services, and informal employment.
- In some countries these impacts were compounded by conflict/insecurity and/or extreme weather events, including drought, typhoons and floods, in particular during the monsoon season; La Niña may add additional pressure on food security in parts of South East Asia and the South Pacific.
- The price of rice, the sub-region's main staple, increased in the March-May period due to the COVID-19 pandemic and has generally remained at high levels in several countries of the sub-region since then.
- The purchasing power of poor families reliant on remittance income (particularly in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, the Marshall islands, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Tonga) and those working in the tourism industry (particularly in Pacific Islands) was severely affected by COVID-19.

In times of COVID-19

Figure 19

Number of people in IPC Phase 3 or above, in 2020



Source: IPC.

Map 9

Asia and the Pacific, acute food insecurity at peak point in 2019



Source: FSIN, GRFC 2020. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Map 10

Asia and the Pacific, acute food insecurity estimates and drivers in 2020 in times of COVID-19



Source: FSIN, GRFC 2020 September update. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Country updates



Afghanistan

Acute food insecurity remained alarmingly high in Afghanistan with continuing conflict, widespread unemployment and price hikes, all exacerbated by the impacts of COVID-19. Around 10.9 million people (35 percent of the population analysed) were estimated to be in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) from April–May 2020. This number included nearly 3.5 million people in Emergency (IPC Phase 4). The four areas of greatest concern were Badakhshan, Daykundi, Hirat Urban and Kandahar Urban, which were classified in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) (IPC, April 2020).

Due to border closures with Pakistan, Afghanistan suffered soaring prices for numerous imported food items such as onions, potatoes and flour (ODI, April 2020). Due to the lockdown measures, unemployment increased even further, and remittances were expected to halve due to the return of Afghan migrant workers from host countries (IMF, April 2020).

Rural food security was expected to improve from May thanks to a forecast above-average wheat harvest, increased self-production of food and better agricultural labour opportunities (FEWS NET, July 2020). But supply chain disruptions could reduce crop sales and earnings from agriculture activities.

 **10.9M** IPC Phase 3 or above
in April–May 2020 (35% of population analysed)

 **7.4M**  **3.5M**
IPC Phase 3 **Crisis** IPC Phase 4 **Emergency**

 **10.9M** IPC Phase 2 **Stressed**

Source: Afghanistan IPC Technical Working Group, April 2020.

In urban areas, the number of acutely food-insecure people was expected to rise due to the negative economic impacts of COVID-19 on informal labour opportunities and high food prices – even though movement restrictions were eased in main cities in mid-May, increasing daily labour opportunities (FEWS NET, May 2020). Overall, in June–November 2020, 10.3 million people were expected to be in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above), with Badakhshan and Kandahar Urban classified in Emergency (IPC Phase 4).

Drivers of acute food insecurity in mid-2020

Conflict/insecurity

In Afghanistan, the protracted conflict continued to severely impact the economy, compromise food production, destroy and disrupt households' livelihoods, erode their purchasing power, drive displacement and hinder humanitarian aid delivery in mid-2020.

The US and the Taliban signed a peace agreement in February 2020, but the number of overall civilian fatalities in the first eight months of 2020 remained at similar levels to the same period in 2019 (ACLED, August, 2020).

From 1 January 2020–10 August 2020, over 122 000 individuals fled their homes due to conflict, with 30 out of 34 of Afghanistan's provinces recording forced displacements. North-eastern areas followed by northern areas were most affected (OCHA, August 2020).

In Myanmar, although the Myanmar Armed Forces declared a temporary national ceasefire on 9 May with reference to the Secretary-General's global appeal, it excluded the areas most affected by the conflict in Rakhine state where fighting escalated (UNESCAP, July 2020).

Economic shocks

Economic decline – often driven by ongoing conflict, but also by the negative impacts of COVID-19 measures on multiple sectors, particularly, tourism, manufacturing and services – continued to be among the main drivers of the extremely high levels of acute food insecurity across the region.

COVID-19-related economic impacts

Loss of income

The sudden loss of service sector jobs created great economic hardship, especially for people in the informal sector (WB, April 2020). Afghanistan, Nepal, Timor-Leste and the Pacific Island Countries (PICs) are among the countries most at risk due to high dependency on food imports and remittances as well as a drop in revenue from exports. Bangladesh, Myanmar, Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, and Lao People's Democratic Republic also are likely to be severely affected by lost incomes and livelihoods (WFP, June 2020).

For instance, in Pakistan, the rapid spread of the COVID-19 pandemic since February 2020 brought economic activity

to a near-halt. The country's main industrial sector – textiles and apparel – is highly exposed to COVID-19 related disruptions due to its labour intensity (WB, June 2020). The forecast contraction in economic growth is expected to have particularly bad implications for the country's informal workers, who account for roughly 72 percent of the workforce (ILO & PBS, 2018) and are at particular risk given their limited access to social protection programmes and low wages.

In the first quarter of 2020, Asia and the Pacific suffered a 7.1 percent decline in working hours – the equivalent of 125 million full-time jobs – relative to the fourth quarter of 2019. A 13.5 percent decline is expected in the second quarter (ILO, June 2020).

Bangladesh, India and Nepal, where at least 9 in 10 workers are informal, are at higher risk of impoverishment. The share of women in the informal sector is also very high. The income of informal workers was estimated to have fallen by 22 percent in the region in the first month of the COVID-19 crisis, causing relative poverty rates of this vulnerable group to rise from 22 percent before the crisis to 36 percent (ILO, June 2020).

Remittances are an important contributor to GDP in several countries in the region, particularly in low-income and SIDs in the Asia Pacific, such as Tonga and the Marshall Islands. Given the significant impact of COVID-19 on the United States' economy, the Gulf States and Europe, and the unprecedented drop in oil prices and production in the Gulf states, income from remittances has sharply dropped. The World Bank projected about a 20 percent decline in remittance inflows to low- and middle-income countries in 2020, with the decline expected to be more severe in Central Asia and South Asia (WB, April 2020).

In addition, quarantine measures have disproportionately affected internal (rural-to-urban) migrants in countries such as India, where lockdowns and travel restrictions have created a huge mass of stranded, unemployed internal migrants struggling to return home (ADB, June 2020).

In Pakistan, remittances are expected to decline by 26.8 percent and in Bangladesh by 27.8 percent. Faced with loss of income, the cost and potential risks of returning home, returning migrants are highly vulnerable. IOM estimates that 193 000 migrants have left Thailand to return to Myanmar, Cambodia and Lao People's Democratic Republic, an estimated 177 000 have left Iran, and another 60 000 have left Pakistan to return to Afghanistan in 2020 (WFP, June 2020).

Tourism-dependent economies in the Pacific Islands have been heavily affected with major GDP contraction projected in 2020 for Fiji, Samoa and Vanuatu (WFP, June 2020). Declines in the tourism sector have led to large employment losses in the services and corporate sectors in urban areas.

In the Philippines, with economic activities stalled, the unemployment rate has more than trebled to 17.7 percent since April 2019 when it was recorded at 5.1 percent (The Philippine Statistic Authority, April 2020).

Increasing food prices

The prices of staples, such as rice and wheat, have risen significantly in several countries. This was in part due to adverse weather conditions in major producer countries in Southeast Asia, but more broadly driven by disruptions to production and distribution due to the pandemic, combined with panic buying (ADB, June 2020). In Pakistan, wheat flour prices increased sharply between November 2019 and January 2020, and again between June and July 2020, due to a combination of lower-than-expected 2020 production, which followed below-average outputs in 2018 and 2019, coupled with local stockpiling and transport disruptions amid the COVID-19 pandemic. By August 2020, they were still at high levels in most markets (FAO-GIEWS, September 2020).

In Afghanistan, the increasing food prices were attributed to partial border closures with neighbouring countries disrupting imports. With eased restrictions, the opening of border points between Pakistan and Afghanistan and the arrival of the wheat harvest, staple food prices began to decline in June from their peak levels in May. Both wheat grain and flour prices decreased further at the national level in July, but prices remained significantly higher than 2019 and the three-year average levels (FEWS NET, August 2020).

Retail prices of rice in the Lao People's Democratic Republic rose about 20 percent on average in January–April 2020 compared with the same months of 2019 (ADB, June 2020).

In Cambodia, there was a substantial increase in the prices of vegetables – some by 60 percent – in March and April. In Nepal, there was a notable rise in vegetable and fruit prices – between 30–60 percent – in some hilly districts. In Timor-Leste, prices of rice, maize and flour increased the most compared to other food items, but vegetable prices, such as chilli and beans, also increased after heavy rain and floods destroyed crops (WFP, 2020).

Deepening inequalities

The crisis is reinforcing inequality in South Asia as poor people have a higher likelihood of having lost their work, and domestic migrant workers who had escaped rural poverty by finding work in cities are being forced back into rural poverty (WB, April 2020). The World Bank expects almost half of the projected new poor to be in South Asia (WB, June 2020). Prior to the onset of COVID-19, 33 million people were projected to escape poverty in 2020 based on the upper-middle-income class poverty line (USD 5.50/day, 2011 PPP). Instead, the number of poor people is expected to increase by 33–38 million compared to the pre-COVID-19 scenario (WB, October 2020).

The pre-pandemic female poverty rate in South Asia was projected to be 10 percent in 2021 but is now expected to reach 13 percent as a result of the gendered impact of the economic fallout of COVID-19. By 2030, 18.6 percent of the world's poor women and girls are forecast to be living in South Asia, up from 15.8 percent according to pre-pandemic projections (UN WOMEN, September 2020).

The proportion of Afghans living in poverty may increase from 55 percent in 2017 to between 61–72 percent in 2020 because of declining incomes and rising prices of food and other vital household goods (WB, July 2020).

Bangladesh is expected to be severely affected by the decline in global and domestic demand for manufactured goods, particularly garments, where 81 percent of total exports come

from. According to the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, cancelled orders will account for about USD 3 billion in lost revenue and affect more than 2 million workers. This will substantially increase poverty levels, since 1 in 4 employees in the manufacturing sector are already poor (WB, April 2020).

Increases in poverty rates are projected to particularly affect fragile economies prone to extreme weather and with already high poverty rates, such as Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste and the Solomon Islands, where about a quarter of the population live below USD 1.90 a day and over 75 percent live on less than USD 5.50 a day. Under a scenario of 10 percent economic contraction, the share of the population living below USD 1.90 a day could increase by over 30 percent in these three countries (ADB, July 2020).

In Indonesia, the poverty rate reached 9.78 percent in March, with the highest rates in urban areas and Java. The World Bank estimates a poverty rate increase to 10.7 percent in the best case scenario and 11.6 percent in the worst, depending on COVID-19's impact (WB, 2020).

Constrained government finances

Constrained government finances reduce the amount of resources available for existing social protection schemes to support the increasing number of vulnerable/food-insecure people (WFP, 2020).

Forecast economic contractions or severely reduced growth rates reflect domestic shutdowns, reduced tourism, disrupted trade and manufacturing, and spillovers from financial markets. Pakistan and Afghanistan are both projected to experience contractions, as mitigation measures are anticipated to weigh heavily on private consumption. Key labour-intensive export sectors are expected to contract sharply and recover only slowly. Growth in Bangladesh and Nepal is expected to significantly slow down due to pandemic-related disruptions including mitigation measures and sharp

Figure 21 Economic indicators (2019 estimates and 2020 forecasts)

Countries	Real GDP growth at constant market prices (percent)		Inflation - Consumer Price Index (percent)	
	2019 e	2020 f	2019 e	2020 f
Afghanistan	2.9	-5.5	2.3	5.0
Bangladesh	8.2	1.6	5.5	5.7
Cambodia	7.1	-1.0	3.2	2.3
Indonesia	5.0	0.0	2.8	2.6
Lao People's Democratic Republic	4.7	1.0	3.3	6.5
Myanmar	1.5	6.0	7.5	7.0
Pakistan	1.0	-2.6	7.3	11.5
Papua New Guinea	6.0	-1.3	3.6	3.2
Philippines	6.0	-1.9	2.5	2.1
Samoa (Pacific Islands)	3.5	-5.0		
Thailand	2.4	-5.0	1.1	1.0
Tonga	1.0	0.5		
Vanuatu	3.0	-8.0		

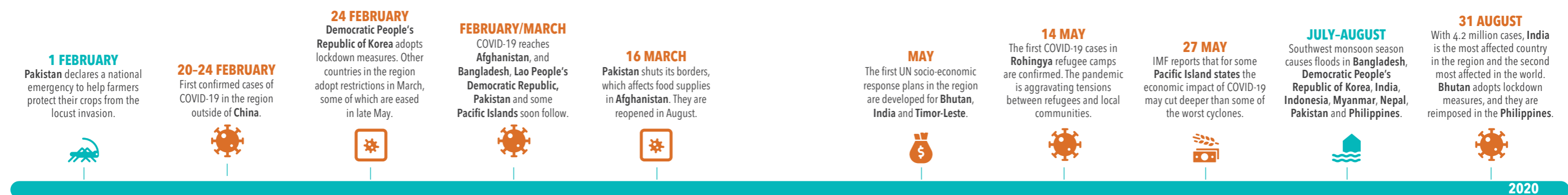
* No data available for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.
e = estimate f = forecast

Source: WB Macro Poverty Outlook, June 2020.

falls in exports and remittance inflows. Nepal will be hard hit by a drop in tourism (WB, June 2020). See figure 21.

Tighter credit conditions, weaker growth, and the diversion of government resources to shore up health care systems and fight the outbreak reduces funds available for key development priorities. According to the IMF, Afghanistan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Maldives, the Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and Tuvalu are at high risk of debt distress (IMF, June 2020).

Figure 20 The COVID-19 crisis timeline in Asia and the Pacific





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Weather extremes and pests

In Bangladesh, this year's monsoon floods inundated one-third of the country and affected more than 5.4 million people. With 40 million people already living below the poverty line before COVID-19, the pandemic could push more vulnerable families into poverty and hunger (UNICEF, September 2020).

In the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, despite bumper harvest and higher rations distributed, acute food insecurity was compounded by COVID-19 and the recent typhoon. In Pakistan, COVID-19 could push more people into acute food insecurity, especially in places hard hit by natural hazards, such as drought and floods last year, avalanches over winter months and desert locust infestation in 2020.

Severe Tropical Cyclone Harold struck the Pacific Island country of Vanuatu in April 2020, affecting an estimated 176 000 people (65 percent of the total population), destroying crops and cutting many communities off from support due to flooding and destruction of roads. Extensive damage to staple crops across the country was reported, demonstrating that food security was a major concern for all affected provinces (FAO-GIEWS, May 2020).

At the end of August, localized floods caused by heavy rains in central and north-eastern Afghanistan affected over 2 000 households, and damaged power and water systems, agricultural land and public infrastructure (OCHA, August 2020).

Displacement update

By the end of 2019, four countries in the region had internally displaced populations. Afghanistan had almost 2.6 million. There were around 312 000 in Myanmar, 179 000 in the Philippines and 101 000 in Pakistan. Pakistan was the biggest host of refugees in the region (1.4 million from Afghanistan) followed by Bangladesh.

While over 500 000 undocumented Afghan migrants return from Iran and Pakistan on an annual basis, a high number were observed in a relatively short period of time at the moment of the COVID-19 outbreak. COVID-19 cases in Iran pushed more than 163 000 Afghans to return to Afghanistan in just three weeks. From 6–8 April, approximately 70 000 Afghans returned from Pakistan to Afghanistan following several weeks of border closure (IOM, April 2020). By the end of September 2020, IOM estimated that nearly 577 000 Afghans had already returned from Iran and Pakistan since the beginning of the year (IOM, September, 2020). Most cannot go back to their areas of origin due to insecurity and economic hardship, so they become internally displaced and face significant financial challenges with very limited jobs opportunities (IDMC, January 2020).

Three years on from the latest exodus of Rohingya refugees who fled from Myanmar to Bangladesh, challenges persist and evolve and there is no sign of the displaced and stateless Rohingya communities being able to return home. By June 2020, UNHCR and the Government of Bangladesh had



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individually registered over 860 000 Rohingya refugees in the refugee settlements in Cox's Bazar (UNHCR, August 2020).

Heavy rains, strong winds, flooding and landslides during the 2020 monsoon season severely impaired people's quality of life with double the number of Rohingya refugee shelters damaged between May and July 2020 compared to the same time period in 2019. Factors contributing to this radical increase in damages include a reduction of pre-monsoon and monsoon shelter and site development programming and monsoon preparedness activities due to COVID-19 containment measures (ACAPS, IOM et al, August 2020).

Nutrition

Before the onset of COVID-19, many people throughout Asia and the Pacific were already finding it difficult to access affordable and healthy food, which in turn had a negative impact on their nutritional status. An estimated 10.5 million children under 5 years were already suffering from wasting, 78 million children were stunted and 17 million were overweight, while 400 million women were anemic.

COVID-19-related school closures have affected over 325 million students from East Asia and the Pacific.¹ Even before the pandemic, the region was struggling with a serious learning crisis, with 31.8 million primary and lower-secondary

age children either out of school or at risk of dropping out (UNICEF, June 2020).

Remote learning during the pandemic has helped fill the gap left by the school closures. Lessons have been delivered on television, radio or mobile phone, or by printed home learning packages (UNICEF, June 2020).

When schools closed, an estimated 98 million students in the region stopped receiving a school meal, which is often students' main meal of the day and an important safety net for children and their households (FAO, UNICEF, WFP & WHO, April 2020).

In many Asian and Pacific countries, micronutrient deficiencies were already recognized as a public health issue before COVID-19, with the most common deficiencies being in iodine, vitamin A, iron and folic acid (FAO, UNICEF, WFP & WHO, April 2020).

¹ UNICEF's East Asia and Pacific region stretches from Mongolia in the north to Tonga in the south, and from Western China to the Cook Islands.

Middle East and North Africa

Algeria Egypt (Syrian refugees) Iran Iraq Jordan (Syrian refugees) Lebanon Libya Palestine Syrian Arab Republic Turkey (Syrian refugees) Yemen



- Protracted conflict and/or worsening economic crises, aggravated by the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19, exacerbated food crises.
- In the Syrian Arab Republic, the security situation remained volatile in north-western and southern areas, which, compounded by COVID-19 containment measures, continued to constrain humanitarian access. Currency depreciation inflated food prices.
- In Iraq, intermittent conflict continued to aggravate the economic situation and threaten livelihoods while anti-government demonstrations restarted amid loosening lockdown restrictions. The collapse in global oil prices dealt a further blow to public finances.
- COVID-19 and the massive explosion in Beirut in August aggravated Lebanon's economic crisis which is characterized by inflation, high unemployment and violent protests. Syrian and Palestinian refugees are finding it harder to access food.
- The Palestinian economy was hit hard by COVID-19, with job losses exacerbating the already high unemployment rate and leading to a drop in household income, pushing more people into poverty.

In times of COVID-19

Figure 22

Number of people in IPC Phase 3 or above, in 2020

Yemen South **3.2M**

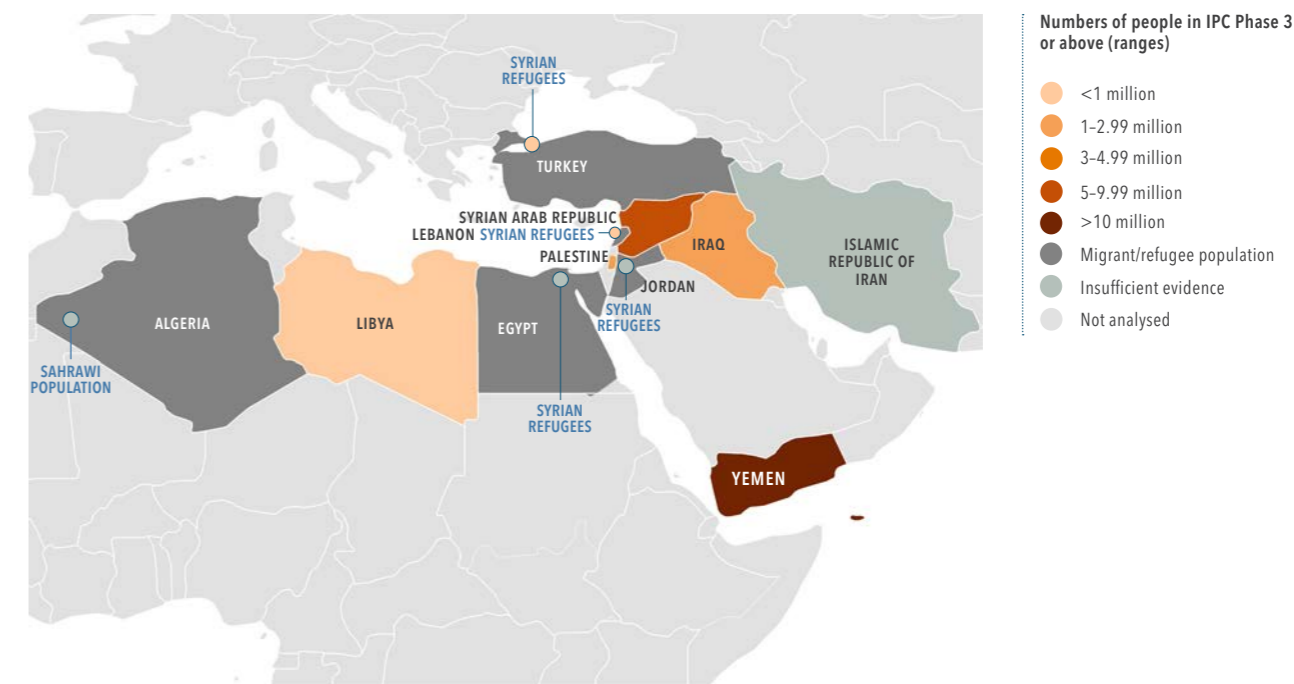


Source: IPC.

Note: The Yemen analysis covers south only. When north and south analyses are combined the numbers will likely be significantly over 10 million.

Map 11

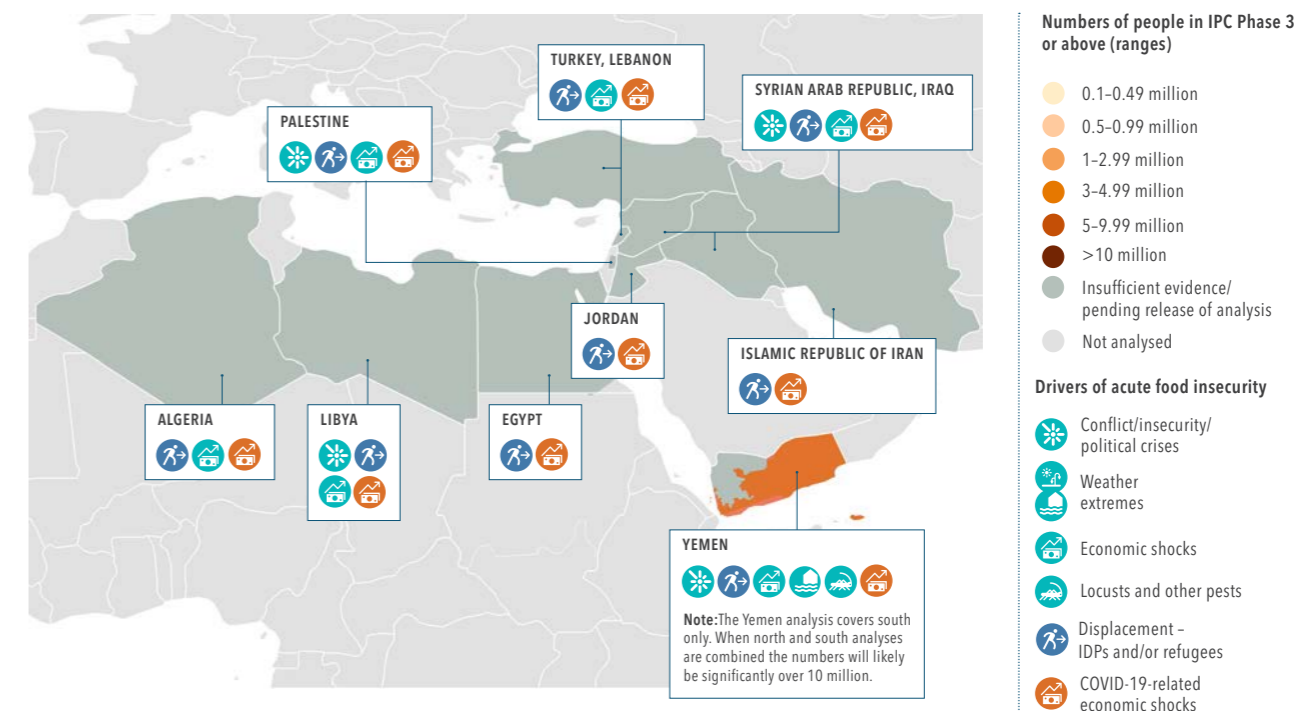
Middle East and North Africa, acute food insecurity peak estimates in 2019 (pre-COVID-19)



Source: FSIN, GRFC 2020 September update. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Map 12

Middle East and North Africa, acute food insecurity estimates and drivers in 2020 in times of COVID-19



Source: FSIN, GRFC 2020 September update. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Focus on Lebanon

Lebanon currently faces the worst economic and financial crisis since the civil war, characterized by hyperinflation, rapid depreciation of the exchange rate on the parallel market and increasing unemployment. The economic situation and lack of prospects for economic recovery are pushing more Lebanese nationals into food insecurity.

Prior to the political and economic crisis that fuelled nationwide protests in October 2019, Lebanon had already been affected by the Syrian conflict, hosting the highest number of refugees per capita in the world. The COVID-19 outbreak put additional pressure on an already collapsing economic system and overburdened national social safety net and health system (WFP, June 2020).

In 2020, violent protests have intensified. From January to the end of July around 33 percent of demonstrations were accompanied by violent rioting versus 19 percent from October to the end of 2019 (ACLED, August 2020).

COVID-19 containment measures coupled with the generally weak economy have constrained livelihood opportunities for many, with casual workers most affected. Acute food insecurity was already on the rise before the COVID-19 crisis driven by increasing unemployment, foreign currency transfer restrictions and the inability of businesses and private depositors to access their USD accounts. The COVID-19 crisis further exacerbated this situation through movement restrictions, loss of income, and food and non-food price inflation. Overall inflation in June 2020 stood at close to 90 percent year on year and for food alone it was 247 percent. From May to June alone, food prices increased by 17 percent (Central Administration of Statistics, June 2020).

World Bank forecasts suggested that COVID-19 will raise poverty levels from 30 percent in 2019 to around 45 percent or more by the end of 2020 (EUROMESCO, June 2020). However, the further deterioration of economic conditions since June 2020 will likely push even more people into poverty.

According to a WFP web survey carried out from mid-April to mid-May, half of Lebanese respondents reported feeling worried about not having enough food to eat in the 30 days prior to the survey. It found that 62 percent of Lebanese households had lower income in April/May 2020 than the previous year. Nearly 30 percent reported having lost their jobs since the outbreak of COVID-19, with women and young people the worst affected. Forty-two percent reported taking on debt in the previous month, mainly to cover the cost of food and rent payments (WFP, June 2020).

This survey was carried out prior to the massive explosion that ripped through Beirut's Port area on 4 August, reportedly caused by the faulty storage of ammonium nitrate. The explosion left some 200 people dead and over 6 000 people injured. The blast destroyed parts of the port including the bulk terminal and main grain silo, caused destruction in nearby neighbourhoods and damaged parts of the greater Beirut area. According to UNDP, an estimated 40 000 buildings were damaged, 3 000 severely so.

Some 50 percent of all Beirut businesses were estimated to be damaged by the explosion, the majority in the wholesale, retail and hospitality sectors. The most vulnerable in the affected areas may have lost both their homes and incomes. Some migrants and domestic workers were reportedly abandoned by the families they worked for, and forced to live on the streets, often with no documentation, potentially hampering their access to assistance (OCHA, August 2020).



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Country updates



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Yemen (South)

In mid-2020, the world's worst food crisis was getting worse – despite an upscale in humanitarian food assistance. According to the pre-COVID analysis, the number of acutely food-insecure people in the country was expected to exceed 17 million in 2020 (FSIN & GNAFC, April 2020).

The latest IPC analysis covered 133 of the country's 333 districts. It forecasts that from July–December 2020, 3.2 million people (40 percent of the population analysed) will be in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above), including 900 000 people in Emergency (IPC Phase 4), if humanitarian food assistance is kept at the current levels (IPC, July 2020). This represents a 60 percent increase since February–April 2020 when 2 million people were estimated to be in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above).

Acute food insecurity is particularly concerning in areas with active fighting, where humanitarian food assistance and market access are both restricted. Taizz (590 000), Lahj (487 500) and Hadramaut (465 500) governorates have the highest numbers of people in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above). Abyan, Aden, Al Dhale'e, Hadramaut, Lahj and Taizz are forecast to face the biggest deteriorations in the number

3.2M IPC Phase 3 or above
in July–December 2020 (40% of population analysed)

2.3M IPC Phase 3 Crisis
0.9M IPC Phase 4 Emergency

3.0M IPC Phase 2 Stressed

Source: Yemen IPC Technical Working Group, July 2020.

of people in need of emergency food assistance between February–April and July–December 2020.

Conflict is expected to escalate in new frontlines, such as Abyan and Socotra, and to continue in old frontlines, severely disrupting economic activities, compromising food production and eroding purchasing power. Access constraints between northern and southern governorates will persist. Traders will continue to suffer the effects of localised lockdowns while remittances are expected to further drop (IPC, July 2020).

Drivers of acute food insecurity in mid-2020

Conflict/insecurity

Fighting in Yemen's years-long civil war continued mostly unabated, despite the UN call for a ceasefire to limit the spread of COVID-19 (ACLED, August 2020). From 1 January to 22 August 2020, IOM Yemen estimated that at least 120 800 people had experienced displacement, mainly as a result of increased conflict in Marib, al Hudaydah and Taizz (IOM, August 2020). Conflict was obstructing humanitarian access in areas of Taizz, Al Jawf and Marib (IPC, July 2020).

In the Syrian Arab Republic, there were nearly 3 000 fewer security incidents in the three months after COVID-19 was declared a pandemic (11 March–30 June) compared with the period leading up to it (20 November 2019–10 March 2020), according to ACLED data – although containment measures likely had less of an impact on pushing down the number of security events than the ebbs and flows of the peace process. Political violence had already fallen sharply in early March, largely as a result of the regime's Idlib offensive ending in a ceasefire between the Russian Federation and Turkey (ACLED, August 2020). However, the security situation in north-western areas of the country remained volatile as of mid-2020, with airstrikes and artillery shelling reported across multiple areas, centred on southern Idlib governorate.

The security situation in southern areas of the Syrian Arab Republic also remained volatile in July, with multiple security incidents reported in Dar'a governorate over the course of the month (WFP, July 2020).

Humanitarians in the country still faced extreme access constraints, compounded by COVID-19 containment measures such as curfews and movement limitations (ACAPS, July 2020).

In Iraq, intermittent conflict continued to aggravate the poverty rate and threaten livelihoods (WFP, June 2020). Mass anti-government demonstrations that began in late 2019 were cut short by the covid-19 lockdown measures and strict security protocols. Amid loosening restrictions, demonstrations began again (ACLED, August 2020).

Libyans have endured nine years of conflict, which has battered infrastructure, including its health system (ICRC, August 2020). Following an intensification of conflict in southern Tripoli, Tarhuna and Sirt in June 2020, nearly 28 000 people were forced to flee their homes. Changing conflict dynamics have resulted in people starting to return home but many areas, particularly southern Tripoli, are heavily contaminated by explosive hazards (OCHA, July 2020).

Economic shocks

The fragile economic environment, often associated with ongoing conflict, continued to be a key driver of high levels of acute food insecurity across the region as individual and community coping mechanisms become exhausted and governments struggle to maintain basic services.

In Yemen, a partial blockade of fuel and basic commodities into the country, which increased the costs of food, water and other services, exacerbated the crisis. Even prior to the pandemic around two in five Yemeni households had lost their primary source of income and found it difficult to buy the minimum amount of food. Shortages of foreign exchange and collapse in government revenues had interrupted the purchase of essential imports and payment of public sector salaries and pensions (FSIN & GNAFC, April 2020). Food

price increases since the start of 2020 were attributable to the effects of currency depreciation as well as households stockpiling food while facing COVID-19 containment measures. The cost of the minimum food basket was 8 percent higher in June 2020 compared with the pre-COVID-19 period of February 2020 (FAO, July 2020).

Throughout the remainder of 2020, the currency is expected to continue depreciating due to worsening currency shortages given limited export earnings, with the highest parallel exchange rates expected in southern areas. This will make imports more expensive, with food prices expected to continue increasing. According to FAO-GIEWS, Yemen needs to import 4.3 million tonnes of cereals in 2020. Between January and April 2020 it imported an estimated 1.7 million tonnes of food of which over 60 percent were wheat grain and flour, almost 25 percent lower than the corresponding period in 2019 (FAO-GIEWS, June 2020). Given worsening currency shortages, further reductions in government payments of civil servant salaries are also expected (FEWS NET, August 2020).

In the Syrian Arab Republic, the entire economy, already battered by nine years of conflict, suffers spill-over effects from the economic crisis in Lebanon. The rapid devaluation of the Syrian pound brought industrial production to a stand still, as businesses were unable to purchase inputs, with a consequent increase in unemployment rates. The national average price of a standard reference food basket in June 2020 was 48 percent higher than in May 2020 and 110 percent higher than February 2020 (pre-COVID-19 period). This WFP reference food basket was more expensive than the highest government monthly salary, outlining the serious deterioration in peoples' purchasing power (WFP, June 2020).

COVID-19-related economic impacts

Loss of income

The curfews and restrictions on the movement of people to contain the virus have limited employment opportunities,

Figure 24

Economic indicators (2019 estimates and 2020 forecasts)

Countries	Real GDP growth at constant market prices (percent)		Inflation - Consumer Price Index (percent)	
	2019 e	2020 f	2019 e	2020 f
Algeria	0.8	-6.4	2.4	3.0
Egypt	5.6	3.0	13.9	9.5
Iraq	4.4	-9.7	-0.2	2.0
Jordan	2.0	-3.5	0.8	0.5
Lebanon	-5.6	-10.9	2.9	15.9
Libya	2.5	-19.4	-3.0	-2.0
Palestine	0.9	-7.6	0.8	-1.0
Turkey	0.9	0.5	15.2	11.0
Yemen	2.1	N/A	14.7	

* No data available for the Syrian Arab Republic.

e = estimate f = forecast

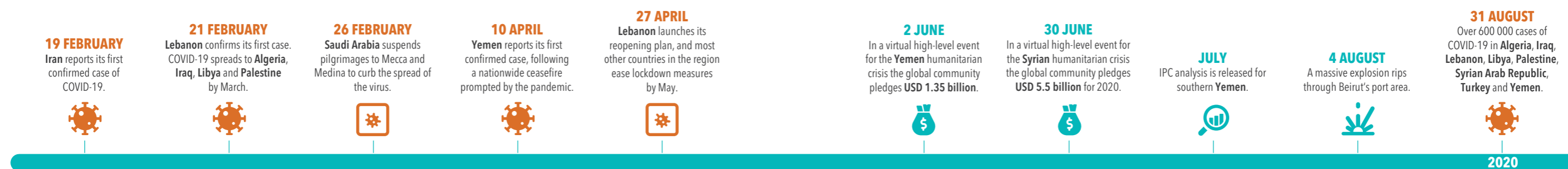
Source: WB Macro Poverty Outlook, June 2020.

especially for casual labourers, and consequently worsened an already unfavourable food security situation in several countries and territories. In Yemen, COVID-19 has eroded household incomes by significantly reducing remittances from the Gulf states, where economies have suffered due to declining oil prices and the impact of COVID-19 containment measures. Remittances represent an important lifeline for most Yemenis. FEWS NET reported remittance reductions of up to 50 percent or more relative to pre-COVID-19 levels in some areas. It also reported lower demand for agricultural labour, which was already declining prior to COVID-19 as farmers preferred to use unpaid family labour. Demand for labour reportedly declined in urban areas too at least partly due to economic impacts from COVID-19 restrictions.

The food security of some households was also likely to be negatively affected by the direct impacts of COVID-19 infection,

Figure 23

The COVID-19 crisis timeline in the Middle East and North Africa



including through increased health costs and fewer household members able to work (FEWS NET, August 2020).

The already struggling Palestinian economy has been hit hard by COVID-19, with job losses exacerbating the already high unemployment rate and leading to a drop in household income, pushing more people into poverty. Informal workers, who account for 60 percent of the workforce, have been particularly affected by lockdown measures. These workers are disproportionately concentrated in poor and near-poor households with no access to formal social protection schemes (World Bank, July 2020).

Increased food prices

In many countries in the region food prices were already surging because of depreciating currencies, particularly in Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic. COVID-19 related trade restrictions, supply chain disruptions, stockpiling and increased demand early in the pandemic have exacerbated the situation in some countries. Lebanon, Libya and the Syrian Arab Republic were among the 20 countries in the world in which the cost of a basic food basket increased by more than 10 percent between Q1–Q2 2020. Lebanon recorded a staggering food inflation of 93 percent (WFP mVAM, July 2020).

Constrained government finances

The pandemic-induced global economic slowdown put downward pressure on international oil prices, which in turn resulted in challenging fiscal situations for many countries in the sub-region given the reliance on oil as the main source of income. Although oil prices have partially recovered, they remained below their levels one year ago as of August (FAO, September 2020).

Oil revenues account for 90 percent of Iraq's total State revenues. Its 2020 national budget was prepared with the assumption of USD 58 per barrel of crude oil. According to the Ministry of Oil, in April 2020, Iraqi oil sold for an average of USD 13.80, down from USD 28.44 in March and USD 51.37 in February. Although there was some recovery in oil prices the dent in public finances remains. The World Bank forecast GDP will contract by 9.7 percent in 2020 (WB Macro Poverty Outlook June 2020). Resentment over poor public services and lack of employment opportunities continued to impact political stability, which coupled with fiscal deficits, will likely threaten the overall food security situation (FAO-GIEWS, May 2020).

Deepening inequalities

The COVID-19 crisis has exacerbated discrimination and barriers faced by women and girls to education, mobility, access to financing and assets, and participation in the labour

force and official decision-making. They are experiencing elevated levels of violence and harassment as well as increased care-taking burdens for out-of-school children, and sick and elderly family members. Women and girls are disproportionately affected by interruption of life-saving sexual and reproductive health services (CARE, August 2020).

In the Arab region, including Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Palestine and Yemen, unemployment among women already reached 19 percent in 2019, compared with 8 percent for men. The pandemic is expected to result in the loss of 1.7 million jobs, including approximately 700 000 jobs held by women. The COVID-19 crisis has disproportionately affected jobs in the manufacturing and service industries, which employ a large proportion of women, and the informal sector in which women constitute nearly 62 percent of workers. Travel bans and other restrictions have also harmed the livelihoods of female migrant workers and their ability to support family members in their countries of origin (UN Women, 2020).

In the Middle East, the pandemic and its aftermath are likely only to intensify inequalities in a region that is already the worst in the world in terms of inequality and the distribution of income and wealth. The IMF projects that income inequality will increase, based on patterns observed after five previous major pandemics (Oxfam, August 2020).

Weather extremes and pests

In Yemen, although agricultural production is limited, it provides livelihoods to many rural households. Crops were damaged by localized flooding and desert locusts.

Devastating rains and flooding first hit the country in April, and rains followed again in June, concentrated in southern and eastern governorates. Tens of thousands of families were affected, many of them already displaced. Heavy rains continued sporadically into July, intensifying at the end of the month and the start of August, damaging infrastructure, destroying homes and shelters and causing deaths and injuries.

Governorates across the country were affected, with Marib, Hajjah, Raymah, Al Mahwit and Al Hudaydah particularly badly hit (OCHA, August 2020).

Floods coincided with the harvesting of wheat in Central Highlands and planting of sorghum in Southern Uplands and Central Highlands. Planting activities were delayed, while standing crops still to be harvested were damaged. Damages on agricultural infrastructure and livestock were also reported (FAO-GIEWS, June 2020).



Nutrition update

Before the onset of the pandemic, many people in the region¹ were already finding it difficult to access safe, high-quality and affordable nutritious food. While nearly 110 million people were undernourished, an estimated 7.6 million children under the age of five were suffering from wasting, 20 million children were stunted, and 5.4 million were overweight.

As food systems and supply chains in the region became disrupted by COVID-19-related restrictions, the region registered job and livelihoods losses, which created further barriers to access quality diets.

School closures left 1 million children at home without access to critical school health and nutrition services such as school meals. For many poor households, school closures and the loss of school meals add to their economic burden. School meals represents about 10 percent of their monthly income.

In many of the countries, micronutrient deficiencies are recognized as a public health issue, with the most common ones including iodine, vitamin A, iron and folic acid. COVID-19 can exacerbate these deficiencies, posing a major threat to the health of children and pregnant women. In addition, COVID-19 may further worsen the vulnerability of children to wasting.

¹ Region covers the following countries and territories: Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen.

Displacement update

By the end of 2019, some 11.4 million people were internally displaced in Iraq, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen. Four of the countries covered here (Turkey, Lebanon, Iraq and Yemen) were hosting over 5 million refugees displaced from neighbouring countries (UNHCR, June 2020).

The deepening socio-political and economic crisis in Lebanon is having a severe impact on the Syrian and Palestinian refugees hosted there. WFP's May/June survey *Assessing the Impact of the Economic and COVID-19 Crises in Lebanon* revealed a particularly concerning situation before the devastating explosion in early August. Syrians were over proportionally affected by layoffs when employers had to close businesses or were forced to reduce staff due to COVID-19 restrictions. Some 61 percent of Syrian women and 46 percent of Syrian men reported losing their jobs as a consequence of COVID-19 (WFP, June 2020).

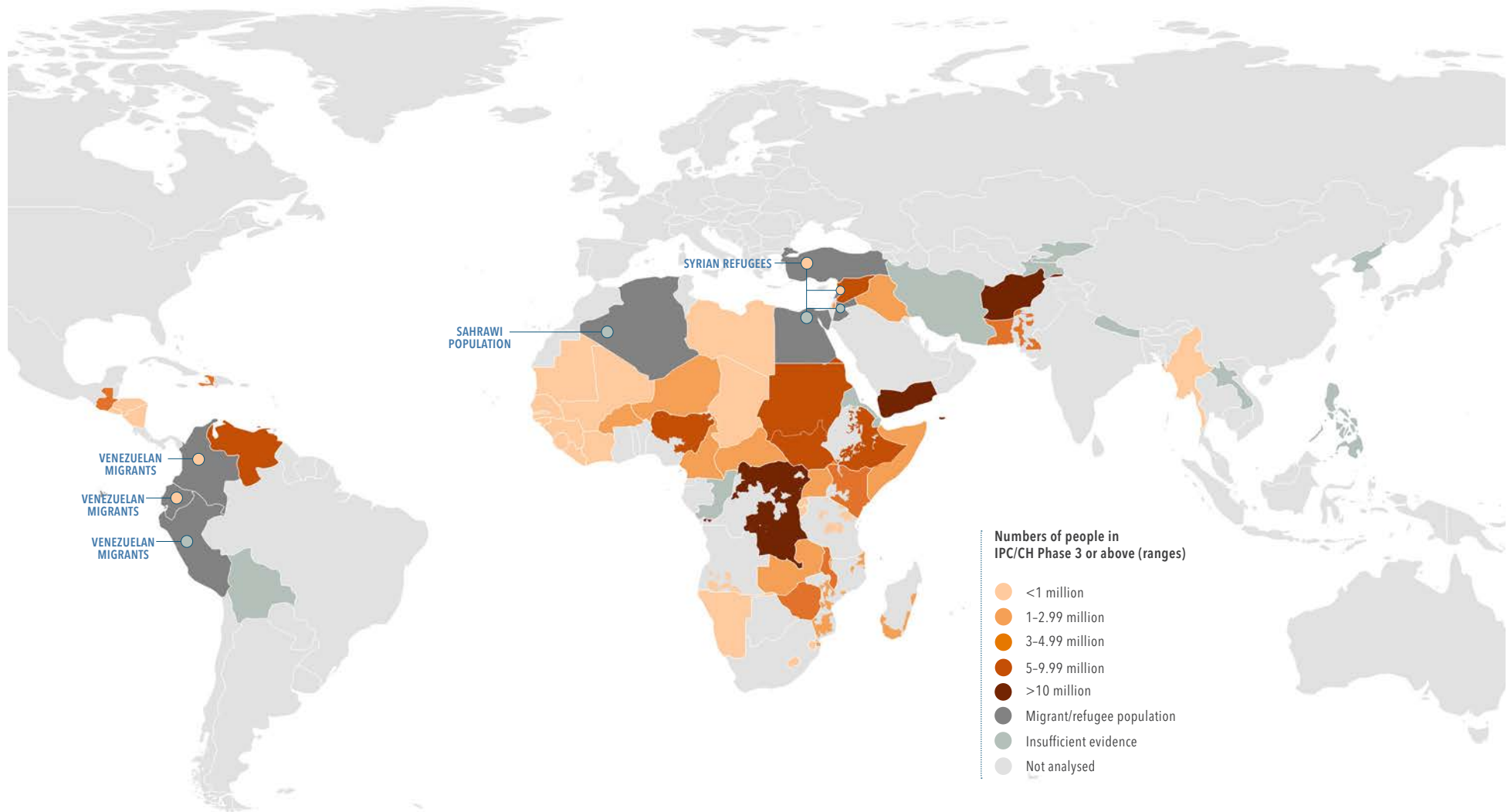
One in four Syrian refugee respondents had exhausted their coping capacities, followed by one in five Palestinians. With food prices soaring, accessing food was a major source of concern – particularly for Syrians with 75 percent feeling worried they would not have enough food to eat in the month before the survey and Palestinians with 63 percent feeling concerned. The use of food-based coping strategies was particularly concerning for Syrian refugees, with 11 percent reporting going a whole day and night without eating and 21 percent skipping meals (WFP, June 2020).

Annexes



Map 14

Highest numbers of people in IPC/CH Phase 3 or above (in millions), 2019



Source: FSIN GRFC March 2020.

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

IPC Acute food insecurity reference table

Phase name and description	Phase 1 None/Minimal	Phase 2 Stressed	Phase 3 Crisis	Phase 4 Emergency	Phase 5 Catastrophe/Famine
	Households are able to meet essential food and non-food needs without engaging in atypical and unsustainable strategies to access food and income.	Households have minimally adequate food consumption but are unable to afford some essential non-food expenditures without engaging in stress-coping strategies.	Households either have food consumption gaps that are reflected by high or above-usual acute malnutrition; or are marginally able to meet minimum food needs but only by depleting essential livelihood assets or through crisis-coping strategies.	Households either have large food consumption gaps which are reflected in very high acute malnutrition and excess mortality; or are able to mitigate large food consumption gaps but only by employing emergency livelihood strategies and asset liquidation.	Households have an extreme lack of food and/or other basic needs even after full employment of coping strategies. Starvation, death, destitution and extremely critical acute malnutrition levels are evident. (For Famine Classification, area needs to have extreme critical levels of acute malnutrition and mortality.)
Priority response objective	Action required to build resilience and for disaster risk reduction.	Action required for disaster risk reduction and to protect livelihoods.	URGENT ACTION required to protect livelihoods and reduce food consumption gaps.	URGENT ACTION required to save lives and livelihoods.	URGENT ACTION required to revert/prevent widespread death and total collapse of livelihoods
ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY FIRST-LEVEL OUTCOMES First-level outcomes refer to characteristics of food consumption and livelihood change. Thresholds that correspond as closely as possible to the Phase descriptions are included for each indicator. Although cut-offs are based on applied research and presented as global reference, correlation between indicators is often somewhat limited and findings need to be contextualized. The area is classified in the most severe Phase that affects at least 20% of the population.					
Food consumption (focus on energy intake)	Quantity: Adequate energy intake Dietary energy intake: Adequate (avg. 2 350 kcal pp/day) and stable Household Dietary Diversity Score: 5-12 food groups and stable Food Consumption Score: Acceptable and stable Household Hunger Scale: 0 (none) Reduced Coping Strategies Index: 0-3 Household Economy Analysis: No livelihood protection deficit	Quantity: Minimally Adequate Dietary energy intake: Minimally adequate (avg. 2 100 kcal pp/day) Household Dietary Diversity Score: 5 FG but deterioration ≥1 FG from typical Food Consumption Score: Acceptable but deterioration from typical Household Hunger Scale: 1 (slight) Reduced Coping Strategies Index: 4-18 Household Economy Analysis: Small or moderate livelihood protection deficit <80%	Quantity: Moderately Inadequate - Moderate deficits Dietary energy intake: Food gap (below avg. 2 100 kcal pp/day) Household Dietary Diversity Score: 3-4 FG Food Consumption Score: Borderline Household Hunger Scale: 2-3 (moderate) Reduced Coping Strategies Index: ≥19 (non-defining characteristics (NDC) to differentiate P3, 4 and 5) Household Economy Analysis: Livelihood protection deficit ≥80%; or survival deficit <20%	Quantity: Very Inadequate - Large deficits Dietary energy intake: Large food gap; much below 2 100 kcal pp/day Household Dietary Diversity Score: 0-2 FG (NDC to differentiate P4 and 5) Food Consumption Score: Poor (NDC to differentiate P4 and 5) Household Hunger Scale: 4 (severe) Reduced Coping Strategies Index: ≥19 (NDC to differentiate P3, 4 and 5) Household Economy Analysis: Survival deficit ≥20% but <50%	Quantity: Extremely Inadequate - Very large deficits Dietary energy intake: Extreme food gap Household Dietary Diversity Score: 0-2 FG Food Consumption Score: Poor (NDC to differentiate P4 and 5) Household Hunger Scale: 5-6 (severe) Reduced Coping Strategies Index: ≥19 (NDC to differentiate P3, 4 and 5) Household Economy Analysis: Survival deficit ≥50%
Livelihood change (assets and strategies)	Livelihood change: Sustainable livelihood strategies and assets Livelihood coping strategies: No stress, crisis or emergency coping observed	Livelihood change: Stressed strategies and/or assets; reduced ability to invest in livelihoods Livelihood coping strategies: Stress strategies are the most severe strategies used by the household in the past 30 days	Livelihood change: Accelerated depletion/erosion of strategies and/or assets Livelihood coping strategies: Crisis strategies are the most severe strategies used by the household in the past 30 days	Livelihood change: Extreme depletion/liquidation of strategies and assets Livelihood coping strategies: Emergency strategies are the most severe strategies used by the household in the past 30 days	Livelihood change: Near complete collapse of strategies and assets Livelihood coping strategies: Near exhaustion of coping capacity
FOOD SECURITY SECOND-LEVEL OUTCOMES Second-level outcomes refer to area-level estimations of nutritional status and mortality that are especially useful for identification of more severe phases when food gaps are expected to impact malnutrition and mortality. For both nutrition and mortality area outcomes, household food consumption deficits should be an explanatory factor in order for that evidence to be used in support of the classification.					
Nutritional status*					
Global Acute Malnutrition based on Weight-for-Height Z-score	Acceptable <5%	Alert 5-9.9%	Serious 10-14.9% or > than usual	Critical 15-29.9% or > much greater than average	Extremely Critical ≥30%
Global Acute Malnutrition based on Mid-Upper Arm Circumference	5%		5-9.9%		10-14.9%
Body Mass Index <18.5	<5%	5-9.9%	10-19.9%, 1.5 x greater than baseline	20-39.9%	≥40%
Mortality*	Crude Death Rate <0.5/10,000/day Under-five Death Rate <1/10,000/day	Crude Death Rate <0.5/10,000/day Under-five Death Rate <1/10,000/day	Crude Death Rate 0.5-0.99/10,000/day Under-five Death Rate 1-2/10 000/day	Crude Death Rate 1-1.99/10,000/day or <2x reference Under-five Death Rate 2-3.99/10,000/day	Crude Death Rate ≥2/10,000/day Under-five Death Rate ≥4/10,000/day
FOOD SECURITY CONTRIBUTING FACTORS For contributing factors, specific indicators and thresholds for different phases need to be determined and analysed according to the livelihood context; nevertheless, general descriptions for contributing factors are provided below.					
Food availability, access, utilization, and stability	Adequate to meet short-term food consumption requirements Safe water ≥15 litres pp/day	Borderline adequate to meet food consumption requirements Safe water marginally ≥15 litres pp/day	Inadequate to meet food consumption requirements Safe water >7.5 to 15 litres pp/day	Very inadequate to meet food consumption requirements Safe water >3 to <7.5 litres pp/day	Extremely inadequate to meet food consumption requirements Safe water ≤3 litres pp/day
Hazards and vulnerability	None or minimal effects of hazards and vulnerability on livelihoods and food consumption	Effects of hazards and vulnerability stress livelihoods and food consumption	Effects of hazards and vulnerability result in loss of assets and/or significant food consumption deficits	Effects of hazards and vulnerability result in large loss of livelihood assets and/or extreme food consumption deficits	Effects of hazards and vulnerability result in near complete collapse of livelihood assets and/or near complete food consumption deficits

IPC Acute malnutrition (AMN) reference table

Phase name and description	Phase 1 Acceptable	Phase 2 Alert	Phase 3 Serious	Phase 4 Critical	Phase 5 Extremely critical
	Less than 5% of children are acutely malnourished.	5-9.9% of children are acutely malnourished.	10-14.9% of children are acutely malnourished.	15-29.9% of children are acutely malnourished. The mortality and morbidity levels are elevated or increasing. Individual food consumption is likely to be compromised.	30% or more children are acutely malnourished. Widespread morbidity and/or very large individual food consumption gaps are likely evident.
	The situation is progressively deteriorating, with increasing levels of Acute Malnutrition. Morbidity levels and/or individual food consumption gaps are likely to increase with increasing levels of Acute Malnutrition.				
Priority response objective to decrease Acute Malnutrition and to prevent related mortality.	Maintain the low prevalence of Acute Malnutrition.	Strengthen existing response capacity and resilience. Address contributing factors to Acute Malnutrition. Monitor conditions and plan response as required.	Urgently reduce Acute Malnutrition levels by: scaling up treatment and prevention of affected populations.	Urgently reduce Acute Malnutrition levels by: significantly scaling up and intensifying treatment and protection activities to reach additional population affected.	Urgently reduce Acute Malnutrition levels by: addressing widespread Acute Malnutrition and disease epidemics by all means.
Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) based on weight for height Z-score (WHZ)	<5%	5.0 to 9.9%	10.0 to 14.9%	15.0 to 29.9%	≥30%
Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) based on Mid-Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC)	5%		5-9.9%	10-14.9%	≥15%
*GAM based on MUAC must only be used in the absence of GAM based on WHZ; the final IPC Acute Malnutrition phase with GAM based on MUAC should be supported by the analysis of the relationship between WHZ and MUAC in the area of analysis and also by using convergence of evidence with contributing factors. In exceptional conditions where GAM based on MUAC is significantly higher than GAM based on WHZ (i.e. two or more phases), both GAM based on WHZ, and GAM based on MUAC should be considered, and the final phase should be determined with convergence of evidence.					

- The mortality mentioned above refers to the increased risk of mortality with the increased levels of Acute Malnutrition.
- Priority response objectives recommended by the IPC Acute Malnutrition Reference Table focus on decreasing Acute Malnutrition levels; specific actions should be informed through a response analysis based on the information provided by analyses of contributing factors to Acute Malnutrition as well as delivery-related issues, such as government and agencies' capacity, funding and insecurity in the area.
- GAM based on WHZ is defined as WHZ < -2 or presence of oedema; GAM based on MUAC is defined as MUAC < 125mm or presence of oedema



The FSIN, founded by FAO, IFPRI and WFP, is a technical global platform for the exchange of expertise, knowledge and best practice among a network of food security and nutrition practitioners.

FSIN provides the core coordination and technical support to the Global Network Against Food Crises analytical pillar 1 which focuses on evidence to better understand food crises. Its purpose is to promote timely, independent and consensus-based information while also highlighting and addressing critical data and information gaps.