

Hunger Facts

Weekend of Prayer and Action Against Hunger
16-17 October 2021

What to know about the hunger crisis

Conflict, COVID-19 and climate change are a deadly mix.

Conflict, climate change and the economic fallout of COVID-19 are now interacting to create new and worsening hunger hotspots and reversing the gains families had made to escape poverty.

This is a children's crisis. Millions of children are one step away from starvation and facing the threat of famine.

If we stand by and do nothing, children will not just starve but they will also be forced to make terrible survival choices that will put them in harm's way and leave lasting consequences.

Time is running out.

Today more than 41 million people are one step away from starvation. More than 40 nations around the world are facing a hunger emergency or worse. The last time the world faced a catastrophe of this scale – the 2011 Somalia famine – 260,000 people died. Half of them were children. But now, the hunger crisis has gone global.

Famine has no place in the 21st century and is entirely preventable.

Everyone is exhausted by the battle to defeat COVID-19, but in the poorest parts of the world, families are now confronted by new spikes in the virus and are literally looking for their next meal.

People know the value in coming together to defeat the pandemic and now we must urgently stand together with the most vulnerable to help them survive.

Facts

- As many as 811 million people worldwide go to bed hungry each night.
- Across the globe more than 41m girls, boys, women and men – around half of them children – are at risk of starvation in 43 countries, and 584,000 people are currently living in famine-like conditions (IPC5) in Ethiopia, Madagascar, South Sudan and Yemen in 2021.
- The global hunger crisis is being driven by conflict, climate change and the economic impacts of COVID-19 that has left people even further behind.
- Global hunger increased by 25% in 2020.
- Up to 811 million people were hungry in 2020, up by 161 million from 2019. This is a 25% increase from 2019, which is greater than the total increase over the past 5 years.
- Hunger increased in **all regions in the world**. Asia has the largest total number of hungry people, but Africa has the highest percentage of its population.
- By 2030, projections are that 656.8 million people will be hungry. This is 6% higher than the number of hungry people in 2015, the year 193 governments committed to zero hunger in the context of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development in 2015.

- 3 billion people (40% of the world's population) could not afford healthy diets in 2020.
- In 2020, 149.2 million (22%) children under 5 years of age were stunted and 45.4 Million (6.7%) children under 5 suffered from wasting.
- Food insecurity is a leading cause of wasting in children, and malnutrition is the main underlying cause of 45% of all preventable deaths of children under five. Children who suffer from wasting are 11 times more likely to die than well-nourished children.
- 30% of women aged 15-49 years old were affected by anemia.
- There is more than enough food produced in the world to feed everyone on the planet.
- Small farmers, herders, and fishermen produce about 70 percent of the global food supply, yet they are especially vulnerable to food insecurity – poverty and hunger are most acute among rural populations.
- Conflict is a cause and consequence of hunger. In 2020, conflict was the primary driver of acute hunger crisis for 99.1 million people in 23 countries.
- An estimated 14 million children under the age of five worldwide suffer from severe acute malnutrition, also known as severe wasting, yet only 25 percent of acutely malnourished children have access to lifesaving treatment.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has had several impacts on hunger which will persist for many years:
 - It increased hunger
 - It made it harder to measure hunger
 - It increased the gender gap in all regions of the world. Women are now 11% more likely than men to suffer from severe food insecurity, compared to 9% last year.
 - Increased child malnutrition