

Hunger Facts

Weekend of Prayer and Action Against Hunger
14-16 October 2022

What to know about the hunger crisis

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

Conflict, climate change, the economic impact of COVID-19, and fallout from the war in Ukraine are intersecting to drive a hunger and malnutrition emergency in which tens of thousands of children could die.¹

- The world is experiencing increasing average temperatures, increases in severe storms and higher levels of and more sustained drought as a result of **climate change**.
- In 2021, **conflict** was the primary driver of acute hunger crisis for 139 million people in 24 countries/territories up from 99.1 million people in 23 countries in 2020.²
 - 60% of the world's acutely hungry live in conflict areas³
 - 8 out of 10 major food crises are driven by conflict⁴
- 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% in 2021.
 - It increased child malnutrition

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 50 million people are one step away from starvation. This is a 46% increase from March 2021.⁵ More than 45 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.

¹ https://responses.wvrelief.net/attachments/article/22043/Food%20and%20Nutrition%20Statement%200622_02.pdf

² <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/global-report-food-crises-acute-food-insecurity-hits-new-highs-enarruzh>

³ WFP (n.d.) "Food assistance: A step to peace and stability," <https://www.wfp.org/conflict-and-hunger> [Accessed 13 May 2022]

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ https://responses.wvrelief.net/attachments/article/22043/Food%20and%20Nutrition%20Statement%200622_02.pdf

Facts

- **Nearly 50 million people in 45 countries face starvation** (are currently rated IPC 4 or 5).⁶
- The number of people in IPC 5 (famine-like conditions) has grown from 166,000 in March 2021 to 881,558 in June 2022 – this is a four-fold increase (430%) in just 15 months.
- 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.
- Rising food and fuel prices are driving up the costs to deliver life-saving aid, rising from US\$6.6 billion needed to support 41 million people at risk of famine to US\$7 billion needed just to maintain the same level of support.
 - In 2020, 30 million IDPs (65%) lived in a location considered to be experiencing the worst food crises,⁷ and more than one-third of all refugees and asylum seekers (30.5 million people) originated from one of these countries (i.e. Syria, Afghanistan, and South Sudan)
- 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.
- 3 billion people (40% of the world's population) could not afford healthy diets in 2020.
- 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.
- There is more than enough food produced in the world to feed everyone on the planet.
- **Country-specific evidence of the impact of food crisis on children:**⁸
 - 7 million children are on the brink of starvation in Somalia, Ethiopia, and Kenya; 90% of their wheat is imported from Russia and Ukraine.⁹
 - Children said they have only one meal a day in Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Central African Republic.
 - Children explicitly reported no food variety in both CAR and Burkina Faso over and over again.
 - Children reported missing school due to hunger, displacement, and the rising cost of food.
 - Hunger is increasing child protection risks – and kids know it.
 - Rising food prices mean families buy less food for the same price, and can feed less people.
 - Children also said that rising prices has led to poorer health and malnutrition.
 - Lack of drinking water is the main concern for children and communities in Mauritania, Niger, and CAR.
 - Lack of humanitarian funding has left children and families in all 6 countries worse off than before.
 - Already in most operational contexts, food security partners have no alternative but to reduce the quantity, quality and frequency of assistance. As a result, millions of people in need are not receiving any assistance.

⁶ Khorsandi, P. and Anthem, P. (2021) "49 million people at risk of famine require urgent intervention," (WFP) 8 November. Available from: <https://www.wfp.org/stories/45-million-people-are-famines-door>

⁷ i.e. Syria, the DRC, Yemen, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, northern Nigeria, Sudan

⁸ https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_w6U-5wKe_3pMyHlSciXvrhmeZCuHD/view?usp=sharing

⁹ See Ukraine Crisis messaging for additional information