



World Food Programme

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

WFP Global Operational Response Plan 2021

Update #3

November 2021

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In October 2020, the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) was named the 2020 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, recognizing the important link between conflict and hunger and the critical role that food assistance plays in supporting peace and stability. One year later, **conflict continues to be the primary driver of an alarming rise of food insecurity and malnutrition, particularly among refugees, internally displaced and most vulnerable.** Even more families are facing food insecurity as conflicts continue, natural hazards increase in frequency, and relentless waves of the COVID-19 pandemic deepen their toll on economies around the globe.

Today, **up to 283 million people are acutely food insecure or at high risk in 80 countries in 2021**, a record high and a devastating increase of 12.4 million people since the June 2021 edition of this report was published. This increase is primarily driven by new food insecurity figures from **Afghanistan, Myanmar, and Somalia.** Meanwhile, famine-like conditions remain a real possibility in 43 countries around the world, with **45 million people facing emergency levels of acute or catastrophic food insecurity** in Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) 4 Emergency and above, up from 41 million people in June 2021. This includes 584,000 people facing famine-like conditions in **Ethiopia, Madagascar, South Sudan, and Yemen;** the situation also remains extremely concerning in **Nigeria**, where areas in the conflict-affected northeast may be at risk of famine should the situation deteriorate further.

Faced by these ballooning problems, WFP is doing more than ever. WFP's biggest planned operation in history has grown even bigger: as of November 2021, WFP's 2021 Programme of Work has climbed to a record **US\$ 15.7 billion in requirements.** WFP is now planning to assist **140.5 million people in more than 80 countries in 2021**, and in the first half of the year, **WFP already reached 90 million people** with cash and food assistance. WFP is saving lives in emergencies, scaling up to respond to newly declared emergencies in **Haiti and Afghanistan**, while continuing to use food assistance to build a pathway to peace, stability, and prosperity.

Thanks to the generous support of its partners, WFP is on pace to notch a record level of support in 2021, with current forecasts projecting **US\$ 8.6 billion** to be received by the end of this year. Yet at the same time donors are stepping up, **operational requirements continue to mount.** WFP's needs-based plan requirements are currently projected to be funded at an estimated **55 percent** for 2021, with global requirements for the next **six months standing at US\$ 5.7 billion** (November 2021 to April 2022). If this gap is not addressed, WFP will need to shift its planned programming. Already, WFP has been forced to scale back its assistance in some countries by distributing half-rations and implementing other prioritization measures.



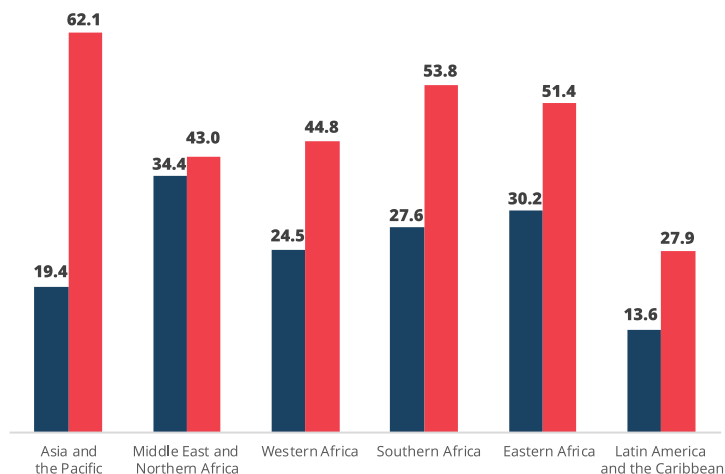
Section I: Looking Ahead: Food Insecurity, Trends and Risks

RECORD-HIGH LEVELS OF ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY

Up to 283 million people are estimated to be acutely food insecure or at high risk in 2021 across 80 countries with WFP operational presence and where data is available. This is a record high, and an unprecedented increase of 88.8 percent from pre-pandemic levels in early 2020: up to 133.1 million additional people are now facing food insecurity. This marks a 12.4 million increase from the earlier estimate of 270.5 million published in the last [update to WFP's Global Operational Response Plan](#) in June 2021. A combination of increasing conflict, economic downturns including remaining effects from COVID-19, and climate change are the main drivers of these constantly high numbers. Most recent increases are based on new data available for major crises such as **Afghanistan, Myanmar, and Somalia**, driven by conflict, economic crises, and erratic rainfalls.

Acute food insecurity is increasing further

- Early 2020 pre-COVID-19 (people, in millions)
- November 2021 estimate (people, in millions)¹



¹ The new November 2021 estimate is the fourth update to WFP's original estimate of COVID-19's impact on acute food security conducted in June 2020 (see methods paper). For this update, the original estimations from June 2020 were replaced with the most recent assessment data and projections for 2021 from Integrated Phase Classification (IPC), Cadre Harmonisé (CH), WFP CARI or comparable analyses for 56 countries, available before October 25. Only IPC/CH exercises with population coverage of above 50 percent were considered, expected peak-numbers for 2021 (or latest available) are used. The numbers are supposed to give a comprehensive estimate of people in need of food assistance for 2021, in countries where WFP operates. The analysis covers rural and urban populations and refugees.

² Newest increases are based on higher estimates in Afghanistan, Angola, Burundi, Haiti, Kenya and Somalia.

More people at risk of falling into famine

Worryingly, the number of people at risk of facing famine-like conditions without urgent immediate life-saving action keeps increasing. It is now estimated that 45 million people could face such dire conditions in 2021 across 43 countries, based on most recently published IPC/CH or equivalent analyses.² Countries with highest numbers of people in IPC Phase 4 Emergency and above are **Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Yemen, Ethiopia, and Sudan**.

In total, 584,000 people are projected to be facing catastrophic food insecurity (IPC Phase 5) in 2021 and require urgent action to prevent widespread starvation, death, and total collapse of livelihoods. In **Ethiopia**, up to 401,000 people were projected to be in IPC Phase 5 Catastrophe in 2021 – the highest number since the 2011 famine in Somalia – due to the impact of conflict in the Northern Ethiopia region. In **South Sudan, Yemen, and Madagascar** people are facing famine-like conditions due to conflict and drought, and a risk of famine exists. Additionally, in **Nigeria**, populations in conflict-affected areas in the northeast may be at risk of reaching catastrophic food-insecurity levels.

People in food crisis or worse: Numbers explained



Several numbers on acute food insecurity have been published, with different purposes and coverage:

283 million people across 80 countries with WFP operational presence in 2021

This number is intended to give a complete overview of food security needs in 80 countries where WFP operates for planning purposes. This report provides the fourth update of WFP's original estimate of 270 million people, established in [June 2020](#). The continuous updates intend to reduce uncertainty of the original estimates by replacing country estimates with new assessment data where available, currently 56 countries. Updates are not intended for trend analysis, but to validate original estimates.

161 million across 42 countries in 2021

In its September update, the [Global Report on Food Crises](#)—a joint, consensus-based analysis by 16 partner organizations, focused on countries where most recent IPC/CH or equivalent data is available—estimated that 161 million people in 42 countries are facing acute food insecurity in 2021. This is a preliminary number, as not all countries covered in earlier years have updated numbers for 2021 available. Updates for some of the world's major food crises, for example **Syria**, are not yet included, as new data is expected only later this year. The final number for 2021 will be published in April 2022.

For further explanations and sources, see [People in food crisis or worse: Numbers explained](#).



THE VICIOUS CYCLE BONDING CONFLICT AND FOOD INSECURITY

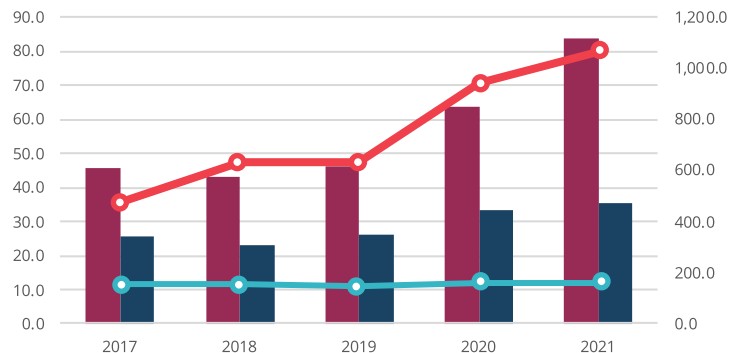
“WHERE THERE IS CONFLICT, THERE IS HUNGER. AND WHERE THERE IS HUNGER, THERE IS OFTEN CONFLICT.”

- **WFP Executive Director David Beasley**

In 2020, 56 armed conflicts were active around the world, the highest number recorded since the end of World War II, and fatalities caused by organized violence increased for the first time in six years.³ While data for this year is not yet available, key trends indicate that conflict levels and violence against civilians are continuing to increase in 2021.

In recent years, there has been a clear regional shift in global organized violence trends from the **Middle East to Africa**, with the number of active conflicts in Africa increasing from 19 to 30 over three years (2017-2020), while in all other regions the number decreased or remained at the same level.⁴ As conflict levels have increased in Africa, acute food insecurity levels have increased in parallel. In 2020, 54 percent of acutely insecure people (IPC/CH 3+) in Africa lived in countries where conflict was the main driver of food insecurity. This share will be even larger in 2021, increasing to almost 70 percent.

Food security and conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa⁵



- IPC 3+ in millions, countries with conflict as main driver of food insecurity
- IPC 3+ in millions, countries with other drivers of food insecurity
- Conflict related events per month, countries with conflict as main driver of food insecurity
- Conflict related events per month, countries with other main drivers of food insecurity

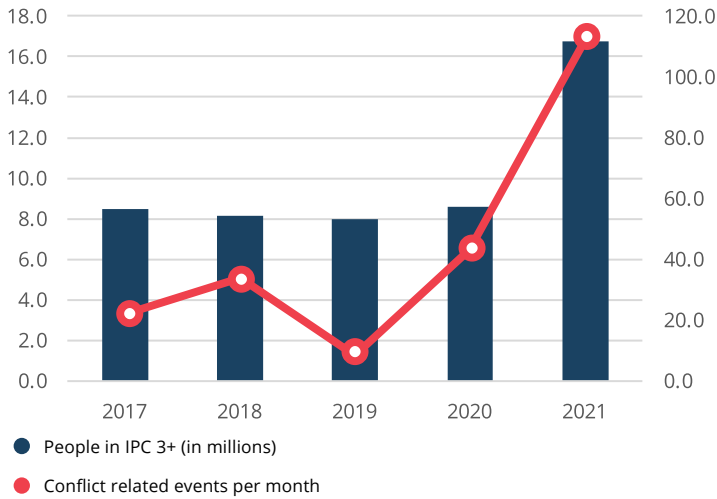
3 Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP).

4 Ibid.

5 The countries in Africa where conflict was the main driver of food insecurity in 2021, based on the Global Report on Food Crises, are Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, and South Sudan. The countries in Africa with other main drivers of food insecurity in 2021 are Angola, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Djibouti, Eswatini, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritania, Namibia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. The number of conflict related events is based on ACLED data, and reported as average number per months, for each year. 2021 considers data until September only. Event types included are battles and violence against civilians.

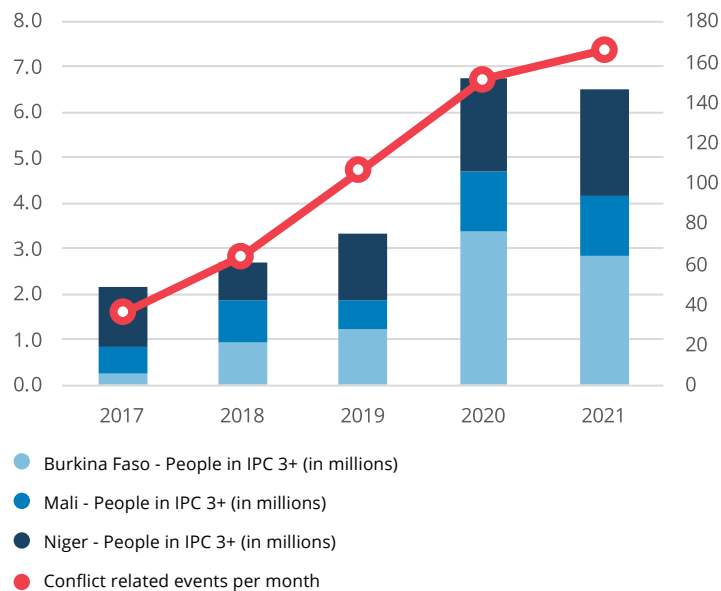
As conflict and violence have expanded in **Ethiopia**, with a ten-fold jump in the number of battles and violence against civilians since 2020, the number of people in food crisis or worse has doubled from over 8 million people at the end of 2020 to over 16 million people in 2021.⁶

Ethiopia



A record level of violence in the **Central Sahel (Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger)** in 2020, which has been sustained throughout the first half of 2021, drove up the number of internally displaced people up from 1.8 million in September 2020 to 2.3 million in September 2021.⁷ The number of acutely food insecure people more than doubled in the three countries between 2019 and 2020, and in 2021, numbers have been further increasing in **Niger**.

Central Sahel



DRIVERS OF FOOD INSECURITY AND RISKS AHEAD



Conflict risks

In the northern region of **Ethiopia**, conflict continues to bring violence and insecurity. In **South Sudan**, growing infighting within and defections from key signatories of the 2018 peace agreement will likely lead to fresh displacements, while sporadic fighting between government forces and the National Salvation Front will continue in the Equatorias. Events in **Sudan** in October could trigger violence among signatories of the Juba agreement. In **Somalia**, long-delayed presidential elections could proceed in the coming weeks which are likely to trigger violence, especially in and around Mogadishu.

In the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, military operations against non-state armed groups (NSAGs) will continue, with civilians caught in the midst of increased militarization and attacks. In **Yemen**, an escalation of military operations in the Ma'rib governorate is likely continue alongside those in al-Bayda and Hodeida governorates. In northern **Nigeria**, re-emerging violence signals a recent expansion by the Islamic State West Africa Province, likely to further aggravate armed conflict. In the three **Central Sahel** countries the drawdown of the French Barkhane forces brings new fears of a resurgence in violence by NSAGs. In **Niger** targeted attacks against civilians by such groups are intensifying in Tahoua and Tillabéri regions.

In **Myanmar**, military operations, especially in the central regions and across Kayah and Chin States may impact on civilian populations and assets.

⁶ ACLED dashboard, Ethiopia, events for battle and for violence against civilians.

⁷ UNHCR, Coordination Platform for Forced Displacement in the Sahel.



Economic risks

The [Food and Agriculture Organization \(FAO\) Food Price Index](#), a measure of price changes in international markets for a basket of food commodities, has reached the highest level in more than a decade, with levels not seen since September 2011. Increased demand in economies recovering faster from the pandemic and localized climatic shocks impacting the production of key crops are the main factors behind the current high prices, which are leaving food-import dependent countries in peril.

High food prices coincide with the COVID-19 pandemic's persistent economic impact. The pandemic has led to currency depreciation, income losses, rapid inflation, and has exacerbated pre-existing macroeconomic fragilities and debt levels in many countries, increasing the likelihood of macroeconomic crises. To make matters worse, in many low- and middle-income countries widespread COVID-19 vaccination is not expected to be achieved before 2023. This could hamper economic recovery and expose countries to further waves of the pandemic, compelling governments to impose livelihood-disrupting restrictions, with repercussions for food insecurity.

In many countries, currency depreciation has further driven up local food prices. Continuous food price increases could lead to higher food insecurity in countries with already elevated levels of food inflation, such as **Afghanistan, South Sudan, Iran, Nigeria, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Syria, Yemen, Ethiopia, Myanmar, Kyrgyzstan, Sri Lanka, Lebanon, and Venezuela.**



Natural hazard risks

La Niña conditions have developed since October 2021 and seasonal forecasts indicate a weak La Niña event will

Interpreting food price signals

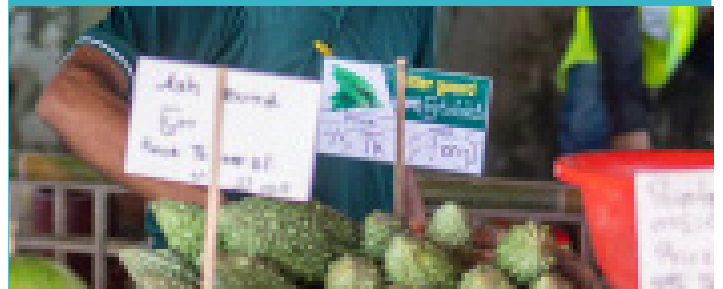
As of September 2021, **the FAO Food Price Index has increased by 33 percent since the same time last year, marking the most rapid price growth in a decade.** Increases in the international prices of agricultural commodities often transmit onto local food price inflation, which in turn can affect food security by hampering economic access to food. Exactly how much increases in international prices affect local food prices depends on numerous factors, such as how heavily a country depends on food imports, whether anticipatory actions are put in place by governments, such as early stocking of food, or how local demand evolves.

Local food inflation is typically interpreted as a warning sign for food insecurity: **when food prices increase, people's economic access to food is reduced, threatening their food security.**

However, the reduction in demand triggered by pandemic-induced economic crises may warrant a modified understanding of price signals. Large income losses caused by the COVID-19 pandemic meant a significant reduction of purchasing power for many households in developing economies.

When incomes are hollowed out, even if food prices stay stable, people can buy less food.

This means that **even in a stable food inflation environment, economic access to food can be under threat and food security at risk.**



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