



Photo: WFP/Theresa Pforr

FAMINE ALERT

We have reached a critical time for action

GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY CLUSTER STATEMENT ON AVERTING FAMINE

The window to avert famine and devastatingly high levels of acute food insecurity in multiple countries is closing fast. Acute hunger projections for 2021 are alarming, humanitarian operations are dangerously underfunded, and violence and insecurity are increasingly obstructing humanitarian access to millions of the world's most vulnerable people.

The colliding impacts of armed conflict, climate shocks and economic turbulence – exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic – have pushed an unprecedented number of people into hunger.

Over 34 million people are at risk of sliding into famine, grappling with emergency levels of acute food insecurity, including 155,000 people already living in famine-like conditions.¹ The majority – some 60 percent – are women and children in rural areas, with scarce means of earning a living or putting food on the table, and often living in some of the hardest places to reach.

We have reached a critical time for action. If the world could see what frontline responders, who work directly with food-insecure people, see daily, there would be no need for appeals to make the awful suffering of millions real to the world. It is a very painful decision to take from the hungry to give to the starving. However, due to funding and access constraints, this is the reality.

The Food Security Cluster coordinates the food security response for major humanitarian crises, alongside more than 7,000 national and international partners worldwide. Together, we are dedicated to ensuring life-saving food assistance and livelihoods support reaches the people who need it most, wherever they are.

However, the humanitarian space is shrinking in an increasingly challenging operational environment. We are committed to serving our partners by scaling up operational capacity and ensuring objective and neutral information and analysis are available to decision-makers to identify needs and anticipate crises. We are committed to amplifying the voices and priorities of local actors and frontline responders, especially at a time when extraordinary humanitarian needs and increasingly challenging security conditions call for extraordinary resources.

Together we call for all food security actors to reinforce the funding appeal for unprecedented, front-loaded, and flexible funding to provide immediate food and nutrition assistance, and urgent support for emergency livelihood interventions.

The International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) [statement on famine](#) clearly underscores that responsibility lies with States to “address rising inequality [and] take the political actions needed to stop conflict, which is a main driver of hunger and barrier to meeting needs”. This aligns with the [United Nations Security Council Resolution 2417 \(2018\)](#) on the link between armed conflict and food insecurity with the threat of famine.

Ensuring that people in the wake of famine and acute hunger recover and build back better is our collective moral duty. Our community of partners is at the epicentre of this massive undertaking: the magnitude of the emergency at hand demands solidarity, that those operating and living in highly challenging environments urgently receive the resources they need.

The terrible crises looming across the world demand urgent and coordinated action and, above all, respect for human dignity.

¹According to the latest data, including recent [Integrated Phase Classification \(IPC\)](#) / Cadre Harmonisé (CH) and other similar analytical processes in countries where the IPC/CH analysis have not been undertaken, 174 million people across 58 countries are in IPC Phase 3 or worse, including more than 34 million in IPC Phase 4 facing emergency levels of acute food insecurity and highly vulnerable to famine and famine-like conditions. Around 85 per cent are in countries with protracted humanitarian crises, including armed conflict and recurring natural disasters.