

Food Insecurity “Hot Spots” Analysis

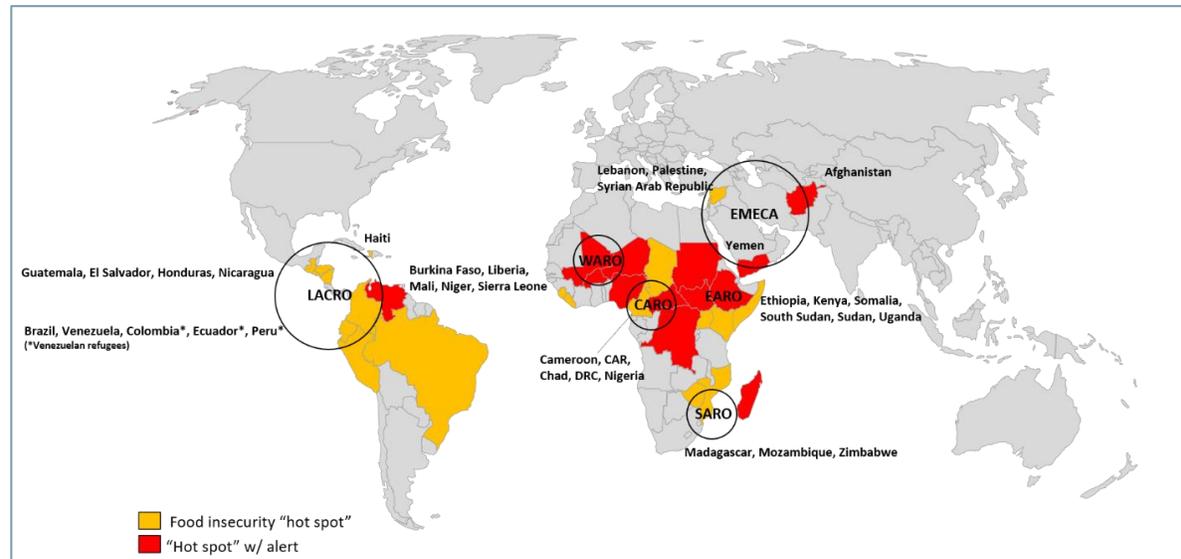
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over a year into the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, health systems are strained, and secondary impacts are often worse than the initial health crises – threatening livelihoods, food systems, and social protections. This is particularly true for vulnerable populations that were already coping with multiple crises. The economic fallout of COVID-19 has caused global extreme poverty to rise for the first time in 20 years;¹ the World Bank estimates that [119 to 124 million people](#) were pushed into extreme poverty in 2020. The World Food Programme (WFP) projects the amount of people requiring food assistance will double, from 135 million people in 2019² to 271 million people in 2021.³

Exponential growth of food insecurity is of particular concern given reduced incomes, slowed food chains and agricultural production, increasing food prices, limited protection of vulnerable groups, increasing political instability and fragility.⁴ As such, this document highlights countries with projections for high levels of acute food insecurity in the context of COVID-19 to *inform response planning and advocacy efforts*, with countries of greatest concern highlighted. Secondary data acquired from multiple sources and cross-referenced with existing analyses were used to select these priority countries.

In this version, 34 countries are included as of concern, with 13 highlighted as those at most risk needing urgent attention; supporting data is included in [Annex I](#).

FIGURE 1. AT-RISK COUNTRIES FOR FOOD INSECURITY BY CRS REGIONAL OFFICE



*Countries whose data may not show a severe impact of COVID-19 may still be of greatest concern due to other exacerbating factors including conflict, displacement, climate change, etc.

¹ World Bank. 2020. [Poverty and Shared Prosperity 2020: Reversals of Fortune](#). Washington, DC: World Bank..

² WFP and FAO. 2021. Hunger Hotspots. [FAO-WFP early warnings on acute food insecurity: March to July 2021 outlook](#). Rome.

³ WFP. 2020. [WFP Global Update on COVID-19: November 2020 Growing Needs, Response to Date and What’s to Come in 2021](#).

⁴ WFP and FAO. 2020. Hunger Hotspots. [FAO-WFP early warning analysis of acute food insecurity hot spots](#). Rome.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICYMAKERS

1. **Bolster humanitarian assistance, including immediate food assistance and protection for those most in need.** COVID-19 has wrought havoc on people's individual ability to obtain healthy, life-sustaining food. Humanitarian funding should help alleviate the immediate needs of the additional 271 million people in need of food assistance.
2. **Address secondary impacts of COVID-19 through longer-term recovery and resilience activities.** While addressing acute humanitarian needs are most urgent, if we do not address the secondary needs from COVID-19, we will become trapped in a cycle of exponential humanitarian need with no end in sight.
3. **Target the most vulnerable to food insecurity and address social cohesion.** Address the immediate food security needs of groups that traditionally fall through the cracks, including those forcibly displaced, women and children, the disabled and elderly; and address fragility and conflict through social cohesion, peacebuilding and other efforts.
4. **Fund local actors to carry out COVID-19 response and meet the needs of local communities.** Build on existing funding mechanisms that frontline and local actors already access to move quickly, including topping up existing multi-year grants, add to existing rapid response mechanisms and country/regional pooled funding and other umbrella mechanisms.
5. **Ensure quick and flexible funding.** Early action and flexible response are vital to address acute food insecurity. Funding must allow for projects to respond to situational fluidity and support decision making at local levels.

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INTRODUCTION

Over a year ago, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 to be a global pandemic. Since then, countries have experienced [second](#) or [third waves of the virus](#), on top of dealing with primary drivers of food insecurity such as conflict, extreme weather events, and economic crises.⁵ For the first time in twenty years, poverty has increased. Updated projections from the World Bank estimate [119 to 124 million people were pushed into extreme poverty in 2020](#). This is expected to continue, with global poverty estimated to increase by over seven percent in 2021. Poverty is linked with food insecurity and malnutrition, displacement, poor health, and higher rates of gender-based violence, just to name a few.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, hunger was already an issue; 8.9 percent of the world's population was undernourished in 2019 and acute food insecurity has risen over recent years.⁶ COVID-19 and the resulting containment efforts have impacted food security and nutrition through many pathways, including loss of income sources, preventing households from purchasing food; constrained government financing to protect the most vulnerable populations; and widening inequalities, especially for women and girls. Further, food prices have reached [a high not seen since December 2014](#) as a result of COVID-19 related supply chain disruptions, giving way to increased malnutrition levels given less access to nutritious foods and healthcare services in addition to constrained humanitarian access.⁷



WFP estimates the number of acutely food insecure people will double from 135 million people acutely food insecure in 2019 to 271.8 million people acutely food insecure, or directly at risk, because of COVID-19 and its compounding effects. Of particular concern are the [34 million people who are estimated to be currently facing Emergency levels of acute food insecurity](#) (IPC 4).⁸ Although the vaccine is rolling out in many countries and cases begin to decline in certain pockets of the world, particularly in high income countries, vaccine distribution to low- and middle-income countries has been [slow and many countries are experiencing devastating outbreaks](#), such as Brazil and India.^{9,10}

This document aims to highlight food insecurity hotspots, considering the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and other compounding crises, to help inform CRS' response planning and policy advocacy. This is a living document that will be updated as needed, given the dynamic nature of the pandemic and drivers of food insecurity (e.g., economic crisis, extreme weather events, and conflict). In this April 2021 version, 34 countries are highlighted as "hot spots" at risk for acute food insecurity; for brevity, the narrative details the 13 countries that may require urgent attention by CRS staff (in dark orange in **Figure 2**).

⁵FSIN and Global Network Against Food Crises. 2021. [Global Report on Food Crises 2021](#). Rome.

⁶WFP. 2020. [WFP Global Update on COVID-19: November 2020 Growing Needs, Response to Date and What's to Come in 2021](#).

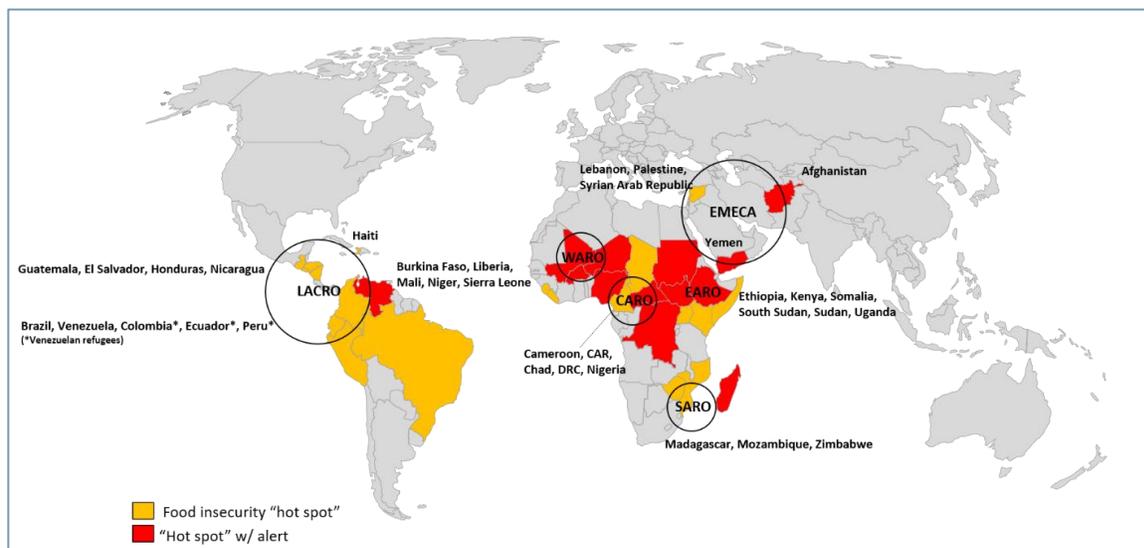
⁷FSIN and Global Network Against Food Crises. 2020. [Global Report on Food Crises 2020](#). Rome.

⁸WFP and FAO. 2021. Hunger Hotspots. [FAO-WFP early warnings on acute food insecurity: March to July 2021 outlook](#). Rome.

⁹See CRS's additional policy papers on the importance of vaccine equity, [Achieving Global Equity](#) and [Until Everyone is Safe: An Analysis of COVID-19 Gaps and Opportunities for US Government](#).

¹⁰WFP. 2020. [WFP Global Update on COVID-19: November 2020 Growing Needs, Response to Date and What's to Come in 2021](#).

FIGURE 2. AT-RISK COUNTRIES FOR FOOD INSECURITY BY CRS REGIONAL OFFICE



*Countries whose data may not show a severe impact of COVID-19 may still be of greatest concern due to other exacerbating factors including conflict, displacement, climate change, etc.

METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

Many secondary sources were used to create the list of "hot spot" countries and further narrow down to the countries of highest concern. Because conflict and crises heavily impact food security, countries with ongoing crises were first selected for inclusion, as well as countries highlighted by WFP, FAO, IPC Info, and FEWS NET as countries of concern or "hot spot" countries. Countries with recent food insecurity alerts and "Crisis" and higher Integrated Food Security Phased Classification (IPC) levels (IPC 3+) were then prioritized as highest concern. Finally, at least one country was highlighted as highest or greatest concern for each CRS regional office. For primary data, market and supply chain monitoring data and Measurement Indicators for Resilience Analysis (MIRA) data countries are referenced below for select countries. MIRA selects a sample that represents the households participating in CRS projects, and the Market and Supply Chain data pertain only to the households surveyed and are not generalizable.

Additionally, contexts can vary widely within and between countries and situations can change rapidly, and therefore, so can estimated levels of acute food insecurity. [Annex I](#) offers supporting data for all countries related to food insecurity and COVID-19 and rationales for their inclusion, as well as external links for additional information on the country's food security status (if available). An estimated impact of COVID-19 on the country's acute food insecurity (limited, moderate, severe) is also included in [Annex I](#). Finally, it should also be noted that only countries in which CRS has a presence were included in this document.

TRENDS OBSERVED SINCE LAST VERSION

In [Annex I](#), the reader can see how data changed between these versions. Generally, food insecurity projections, specifically the IPC levels, have remained the same except for a few countries. COVID-

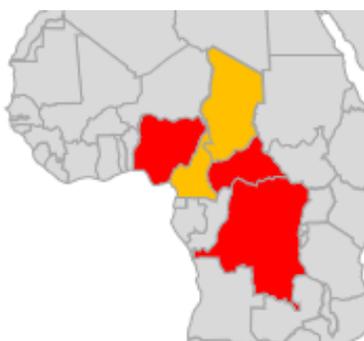
19 related restrictions have increased in many countries, given rising cases, but country cargo entry statuses remain unchanged since December. For countries that have COVID-19 hunger snapshots reported by WFP, health access deteriorated in most reporting countries. Health access is of particular concern, given the explosion of COVID-19 cases worldwide.

IPC LEVELS	Unchanged in 18 of 23 reporting countries
COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS	Increased in 13 of 29 countries
CARGO ENTRY STATUS	Unchanged in 29 of 29 countries
HEALTH ACCESS	Lessened in 11 of 20 reporting countries

ASIA REGION

This report does not include countries in the Asia region given a dearth of information on acute food insecurity. However, CRS should monitor primary and secondary data on the impact of COVID-19 on livelihoods and food consumption in India, given the devastating COVID-19 outbreak and [implementation of restrictions by the Indian government in certain states](#). India's COVID-19 crisis has already impacted neighboring countries, such as Nepal, who [rely on India for medical necessities](#) such as oxygen and COVID-19 vaccines. Nepal recently [enacted lockdowns](#) amidst a massive surge in cases, and one of the worst hit areas borders the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. Myanmar is also experiencing rising food insecurity given the military coup in February and the country's financial crisis. The WFP estimates [3.4 million people may not be able to afford](#) food in the upcoming months, especially in urban areas, given food price increases and job losses.

CENTRAL AFRICA REGION



Multiple countries within Central African region are projected to have high levels of food insecurity (IPC 3+), given conflict and displacement in Cameroon, Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and Nigeria. CAR, DRC, and Nigeria are the countries of greatest concern in CARO.

Major drivers of food insecurity in **CAR** include instability and displacement following the December elections, COVID-19 disruptions to imports of foodstuffs from Cameroon, and low agricultural production. Between May and August 2021, which corresponds with CAR's lean season, [48 percent of the analyzed population is expected to face high levels of food insecurity](#) (2.31

million people in IPC 3+). Further, 525,000 are projected to face Emergency levels of food insecurity (IPC 4) in ten sub-prefectures of CAR because of these major drivers. WFP's [latest hunger snapshot](#) reports decreasing access to health services, with nearly 75 percent reporting challenges accessing markets and 63 percent using crisis or above crisis-level food-based coping.

The **DRC**, one of the three worst global food crises for three consecutive years, had almost 22 million people in Crisis levels of food insecurity or worse (IPC 3+) in 2020.¹¹ FEWS NET projects [Crisis levels of acute food insecurity \(IPC 3+\)](#) between April and September 2021 in parts of eastern DRC, including North Kivu, South Kivu, and Ituri, and a small proportion of newly displaced households facing Emergency acute food insecurity (IPC 4) during the short lean season. Conflict has been the [primary driver of food insecurity in DRC](#), followed by the long-term consequences of COVID-19 mitigation measures and weak economic performance. WFP now offers urban food insecurity analyses for limited areas, including for Kinshasa. According to the [latest update](#), over 81 percent of respondents in Kinshasa reported challenges accessing health services, 32 percent reported challenges accessing markets, and over 52 percent have been using crisis or emergency livelihood coping strategies.

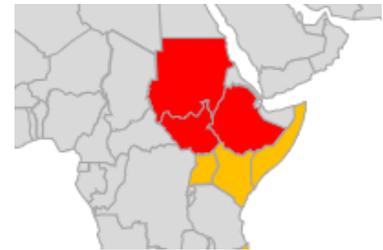
¹¹ FSIN and Global Network Against Food Crises. 2021. [Global Report on Food Crises 2021](#). Rome.

According to the latest [Cadre Harmonisé](#), 9.2 million people in **Nigeria** are currently facing Crisis or higher levels of food insecurity (IPC 3+), with nearly 500,000 facing Emergency levels of food insecurity (IPC 4). From June to August 2021, an estimated 12.8 million people in Nigeria may face Crisis or higher levels of food insecurity (IPC 3+) with nearly 800,000 people estimated to face Emergency (IPC 4) levels of food insecurity. The northeastern Borno State is of particular concern, with a [risk of Catastrophe levels of acute food insecurity \(IPC 5\)](#) if households cannot access food or income sources and humanitarian access remains constrained. Nigeria continues to suffer from protracted conflict in the northeast, conflict in the northwest and northcentral states, poor macroeconomic conditions, increased cereal prices, and the fallout from COVID-19, including high inflation.

Ongoing market monitoring efforts in northeast Nigeria identified inflation of food prices, enabling CRS to flag the need for increasing the transfer value for e-vouchers for its program participants with USAID. USAID's rapid approval allowed for 14,000 households in northeast Nigeria to receive higher transfer value amounts to meet their daily needs.

EAST AFRICA REGION

Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda are projected to have high levels of food insecurity in the context of COVID-19 (IPC 3+), as well as multiple compounding factors including locust and other pest infestations, conflict, displacement, weather extremes, economic decline and inflation.¹² Within this region, Ethiopia, South Sudan, and Sudan are the countries of greatest concern.



Food assistance needs are at their [highest levels since 2016](#) across much of **Ethiopia** because of multiple severe shocks, including conflict in Tigray and multiple other regions disrupting local production and marketing activities, atypically dry conditions in *belg*-cropping and pastoral areas, high inflation and depreciation of the local currency, and COVID-19-related impacts on job losses and reduced remittances.¹³ With the impending national and regional elections scheduled for June, there are also [concerns about potential violence](#), which could exacerbate acute food insecurity. Crisis and higher levels of food insecurity (IPC 3+) are expected throughout the country, with [Emergency conditions likely occurring in Tigray \(IPC 4\) with possibility of Catastrophe](#) levels of food insecurity (IPC 5). Data collected by CRS for market and supply chain analyses in December 2020 indicated that 76 percent of respondents had livelihoods concerns.

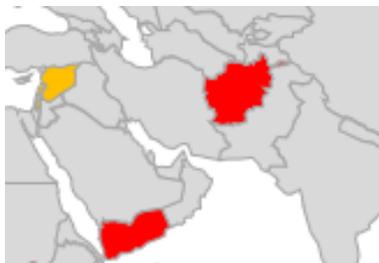
Like Ethiopia, **South Sudan** has suffered [multiple, combining shocks](#), such as active conflict, flooding, displacement, poor crop production, limited access to basic services, and the cumulative effects of prolonged loss of livelihoods. Currency depreciation and its impacts on commodity prices and income, in combination with the effects of COVID-19 mitigation measures, have also decreased purchasing power. Over 7 million people are expected to face Crisis levels of acute food insecurity from April to July 2021 (IPC 3+), also coinciding with lean season, with 2.4 million people facing Emergency (IPC 4) and 108,000 people in Catastrophe (IPC 5). A Famine Review Committee concluded that four payams in Pibor County were [“famine likely”](#) between October and November 2020 and would continue from December to July 2021 without sustained and timely humanitarian assistance.

Sudan is expected to face Crisis levels of acute food insecurity (IPC 3+) throughout much of the country through the peak of lean season (June to September), given [high food prices and below average household purchasing power, displaced peoples, and the economic impacts of COVID-19](#). Headline inflation in Sudan was recorded at [331 percent](#) at the time of this report. FEWS NET reports that recently displaced households, refugees, those affected by a below-average harvest, and urban poor households remain at highest risk for food insecurity.

¹² WFP and FAO. 2021. Hunger Hotspots. [FAO-WFP early warnings on acute food insecurity: March to July 2021 outlook](#). Rome.

¹³ Ibid

EUROPE, MIDDLE EAST, & CENTRAL ASIA REGION



Within the region, Afghanistan, Lebanon, the State of Palestine, Syrian Arab Republic, and Yemen are projected to have high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC 3+) in the context of COVID-19.

In this region, **Afghanistan** and **Yemen** are countries of greatest concern. For both countries, conflict is the main driver of acute food insecurity, and both experienced high levels of displacement.¹⁴ Other drivers of food insecurity in Afghanistan include [COVID-19's impact on daily wage opportunities and small trader income, reduced income and persistent unemployment, high food prices, and below average rainfall](#). IPC estimates that for June to November, 9.5 million people will face Crisis or worse levels of food insecurity. The [increasing conflict](#) in Afghanistan is worrisome, given the uncertainty of what will happen after the [withdrawal of U.S. troops](#) and potential impacts on food insecurity.

In addition to conflict, which has impacted agricultural and livestock production, **Yemen** is experiencing reduced funding for humanitarian assistance, increasing prices of food commodities, and currency depreciation.¹⁵ Over [15 million people](#) are expected to face Crisis levels of acute food insecurity (IPC 3+) in Yemen between April and October 2021. WFP-FAO's latest hot spot analysis warns that Yemen is increasingly at risk of additional people facing famine-like conditions given severe malnutrition, rising displacement, and deteriorating economic conditions.¹⁶

LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN REGION

Regionally, hunger in Latin America and the Caribbean has quadrupled in WFP-operating countries and the region is experiencing its worst recession in 100 years.¹⁷ Many countries in the region are projected to have high levels of food insecurity (IPC 3+ in countries where FEWS NET operates), including Brazil, Colombia[¥], Ecuador[¥], El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Peru[¥], and Venezuela.



Venezuela is the country of greatest concern in the region. As reported in previous analyses, 4.3 million Venezuelans are displaced in the region, primarily in Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru.¹⁸ Nearly [7 of 10 Venezuelan migrants lost income](#) because of COVID-19, with many having relied on informal sales or labor for income. Within the country of Venezuela, it is predicted food insecurity will worsen because of international sanctions and hyperinflation;¹⁹ at the time of this report, food inflation in Venezuela was reported to be [2795 percent](#).

Although not of highest concern, Brazil has been newly added given the recent reports of [rising hunger – 19 million people are living with serious levels of food insecurity](#) while nearly 117 million, over half of the country's population, live with some level of food insecurity (mild, moderate, or severe as measured by the researchers). Brazil has also suffered from extremely high cases of COVID-19, with a slow vaccine rollout, a more contagious variant, and relaxation of COVID-19 measures that [could further exacerbate the ongoing crisis](#).

Hunger has quadrupled in Latin America and the Caribbean, and the region is experiencing its worst recession in 100 years

¹⁴ FSIN and Global Network Against Food Crises. 2021. [Global Report on Food Crises 2021](#). Rome.

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ WFP and FAO. 2021. Hunger Hotspots. [FAO-WFP early warnings on acute food insecurity: March to July 2021 outlook](#). Rome.

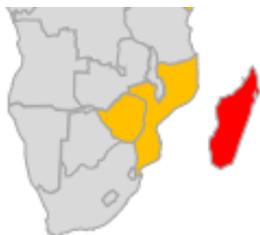
¹⁷ WFP. 2020. [WFP Global Update on COVID-19: November 2020 Growing Needs, Response to Date and What's to Come in 2021](#).

[¥] Venezuelan migrants in these countries are the primary focus of acute food insecurity.

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ WFP and FAO. 2021. Hunger Hotspots. [FAO-WFP early warnings on acute food insecurity: March to July 2021 outlook](#). Rome.

SOUTHERN AFRICA REGION

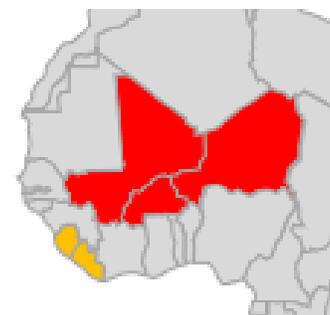


Within the Southern Africa region, Madagascar, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe are projected to have high levels of food insecurity (IPC 3+).²⁰ In southern Africa, [conflict and weather shocks](#) are primary drivers of acute food insecurity, as well as economic shocks related to COVID-19.²¹

Regionally, **Madagascar** is the country of greatest concern, with 1.14 million people or [43 percent of the population](#) estimated to face high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC 3+) between April to September 2021 in the Deep South, including 392,000 in Emergency (IPC 4) and 14,000 in Catastrophe (IPC 5). Insufficient rainfall, sandstorms, COVID-19 related restrictions causing rising food prices and reduced income, as well as Fall Armyworm, locusts and other pests in the Deep South are key drivers of acute food insecurity. Food assistance is currently a key food source for many of the worst-affected households and limited assistance is available. COVID-19 cases were at a [peak in April](#), which affected people in all regions including the South

WEST AFRICA REGION

Multiple countries in West Africa are experiencing conflict and displacement that are driving projections of high levels of food insecurity (IPC 3+), including Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger. Increasing food prices, reduced remittances, and increased unemployment in the informal sector because of COVID-19 measures are also driving food insecurity in Sierra Leone and Liberia.²²



Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger are all of greatest concern because of continued [conflict and displacement in the Sahel, as well as the impact of COVID-19 measures on livelihoods and access to diverse and affordable foods](#). Liptako Gourma, the bordering area between the three countries, is projected to be the most impacted by conflicts and thus food insecurity. Over 2.8 million people are expected to face high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC 3+) in Burkina Faso, 1.3 million people in Mali, and 2.3 million people in Niger between June and August 2021. In the last two rounds of Market and Supply Chain data collected by CRS for Niger, 86 percent of respondents in March 2021 reported insufficient money for market items and 68 percent reported livelihoods concerns.

NEXT STEPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this analysis, 34 countries have been detailed as having projections for high levels of acute food insecurity in the context of COVID-19 (IPC 3+). Thirteen of those countries may require additional immediate assistance to meet food security and nutrition needs ([Table 1](#)).

²⁰ Zimbabwe has had an [above average 2021 harvest](#), and its government has imposed maize import restrictions. However, above average harvests may not translate into household food security; for example, [prices for other food and non-food items remain high](#).

²¹ FSIN and Global Network Against Food Crises. 2021. [Global Report on Food Crises 2021](#). Rome.

²² WFP and FAO. 2021. Hunger Hotspots. [FAO-WFP early warnings on acute food insecurity: March to July 2021 outlook](#). Rome.

TABLE 1. COUNTRIES OF HIGHEST CONCERN FOR FOOD INSECURITY

Regions	Country of Highest Concern	Estimated Secondary Impact of COVID-19 on Food Security & Livelihoods
CARO	CAR	Severe
	DRC	Severe
	Nigeria	Severe
EARO	Ethiopia	Severe
	South Sudan	Severe
	Sudan	Moderate
EMECA	Afghanistan	Severe
	Yemen	Moderate
LACRO	Venezuela	Severe
SARO	Madagascar	Severe
WARO	Burkina Faso	Moderate
	Mali	Moderate
	Niger	Moderate

Sources note that the impact of COVID-19 on food security and livelihoods is highly contextual, and the effects will vary by population.²³ According to WFP and FAO, the following drivers of acute food insecurity can be expected over the coming months:

- **Conflict and displacement**, which could also impact humanitarian access.
- **Economic fallout from COVID-19**, including reduced remittances, exports, tourism, industrial production, as well as currency depreciation and increasing inflation.
- **Natural hazards**, including weather events driven by La Niña, droughts, recurrent hurricanes, droughts, sandstorms etc.
- **Pests**, such as fall armyworm and desert locusts, particularly throughout east Africa and the Red Sea Coast, as well as parts of southern Africa.²⁴

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICYMAKERS

U.S. government bodies, such as USAID, have encouraged redirection of funds to address the impacts of COVID-19 on project participants. This flexibility has allowed for adaptive programming, such as cash transfers and mobile health messaging. To further address the impacts of COVID-19, CRS recommends that the U.S. government and policymakers adopt the following recommendations:

1. **Bolster humanitarian assistance, including immediate food assistance and protection for those most in need.** COVID-19 has exacerbated acute food insecurity and limited people’s ability to obtain healthy, life-sustaining food. Humanitarian funding should help alleviate the immediate needs of the 271 million people in need of food assistance and can be optimized by:
 - Utilizing cash and voucher assistance where possible, to bolster weakened market systems, and ensure quick responses. This should be done in conjunction with market monitoring, which can often also act as an early warning of impending food insecurity.
 - Using local and regional procurement, when feasible, rather than relying on importing U.S. commodities to avoid delays in lifesaving assistance.
 - Working to minimize interruptions to food chains and ensure functioning and resilience of agri-food system by providing support for food storage, processing, marketing, transport; supporting producers’ groups; and advocating for open trade corridors.
 - Supporting multilateral efforts to reduce food-related restrictions to allow markets to flow and therefore get food to those who need it most.

To address the impacts of COVID-19 on acute food insecurity, we need to scale up foreign assistance that is flexible and timely.

²³ WFP and FAO. 2020. Hunger Hotspots. [FAO-WFP early warning analysis of acute food insecurity hot spots](#). Rome.

²⁴ WFP and FAO. 2021. Hunger Hotspots. [FAO-WFP early warnings on acute food insecurity: March to July 2021 outlook](#). Rome.

- Implementing through local and international NGOs who are closest to the ground, while relying on multilateral agencies (UN, World Bank) to increase joint needs assessments and improve coordinate responses.
 - Working through diplomatic and bureaucratic channels to address barriers to humanitarian assistance including securing cease fires and adequate humanitarian access, as well as addressing bureaucratic barriers that keep humanitarian organizations from being able to operate (e.g., organization registration or visa restrictions).
2. **Address secondary impacts of COVID-19 through longer-term recovery and resilience activities.** While addressing acute humanitarian needs are most urgent, if we do not address the secondary impacts of COVID-19, we will become trapped in a cycle of exponential humanitarian need with no end in sight. Activities that help with recovery and build resilience may include cash transfers, women’s savings groups, or diversifying livelihoods to expand economic opportunities. We encourage that these efforts:
- Be as integrated and comprehensive as necessary, understanding that the secondary impacts are interconnected and related. The current resilience food security activities (RFSAs) are well positioned to meet these evolving needs, and should take account of the impacts of COVID-19 on social cohesion and increased trauma and gender-based violence.
 - Utilize unconditional cash transfers where feasible, which accelerate recovery and [help reduce poverty-related outcomes](#), such as food insecurity – provided goods are available locally for sale and prices are not prohibitive.
 - Help support social protection systems and mechanisms where they exist, to allow those in debt to move forward.
 - Enhance systems-level resilience, particularly in health systems and supply chains, to withstand future shocks.
3. **Target the most vulnerable to food insecurity and address social cohesion.** U.S. foreign assistance, in alignment with Catholic Social Teaching, has always been a beacon of light for those most vulnerable. To ensure U.S. government COVID-19 responses further this effort, programs should:
- Address the immediate food security needs of groups that traditionally fall through the cracks, including those forcibly displaced, women and children, the disabled and elderly.
 - Address fragility and conflict through social cohesion, peacebuilding and other efforts, integrated into existing food security programming as feasible.
4. **Fund local actors to carry out COVID-19 response and meet the needs of local communities.** Local actors help drive more integrated responses, given they respond to community needs holistically because they are not divided by sector and are less donor-driven in their response. The U.S. government should build on existing funding mechanisms that frontline and local actors already access to move quickly, including topping up existing multi-year grants, add to existing rapid response mechanisms, and utilize country/regional pooled funding and other umbrella mechanisms to address acute food insecurity needs.

Funding for local actors should include overhead costs and donors should proactively ensure equitable risk sharing so local actors do not carry undue risk burdens. CRS, as a major humanitarian actor, abides by humanitarian principles, and the principle of “Do No Harm” underlies all efforts to promote local funding and response. Faith-based organizations (FBOs), who have broad community recognition and are trusted by people of all faiths, should be included as frontline actors in the COVID-19 response. Faith leaders can help with behavior change and are critical partners not to be missed. As needed, capacity strengthening should continue alongside direct funding. Donors should also fund local institutional participation in decision making and coordination processes related to the COVID-19 response, including holding a lead or co-lead role in cluster or sector coordination.

5. **Ensure quick and flexible funding.** Early action and flexible response are vital to address acute food insecurity. Funding must allow for projects to respond to situational fluidity and support decision making at local levels.

Flexibility should support changes in project activities, costs, and accountability and compliance measures, including for keeping staff and project participants safe, as well as integration of food security response activities through crisis modifiers and modifications and the addition of new activities utilizing existing projects and partnerships. In some cases, mission-level funding, in the form of new and smaller grants, may be the best type of funding. Where possible, issue clear guidance to missions and field offices to ensure flexibility is available and implemented uniformly and without delay in this challenging time. Further, open communication should be maintained with implementing agencies to allow for exchange of evidence or situational updates and to help justify programmatic changes.



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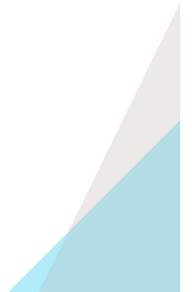
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ANNEX I. SUPPORTING DATA FOR PRIORITY COUNTRIES

CRS Office	Country (Bold = country of greatest concern)	Highest IPC (May 2021) ¹	GCSI ²	Food Inflation or Headline Inflation*	COVID Stringency Index ⁴	Country Cargo Entry Status ⁵	Market Access Challenges (% of Resp.) ⁶	Negative Food Coping Strategies (% of Resp.) ⁷	Health Access Challenges (% of Resp.) ⁸	Emergency/Crisis Livelihood Coping (% of Resp.) ⁹	Estimated Impact of COVID-19 on Acute Food Insecurity
CARO	Cameroon	3 →	4 →	3.5%	20.4 →	Open →	39.2% →	—	56.0% →	37.9% →	Severe →
CARO	CAR	3 →	5 ↑	1.9%*	20.4 →	Open →	12.6% →	24.7% →	63.9% →	—	Severe →
CARO	Chad	3 →	5 →	5.1%	70.4 →	Limited →	14.2% →	—	85.0% →	57.0% →	Severe →
CARO	DRC	3 →	5 →	6.2%*	20.2 →	Limited →	51.1% →	—	79.6% →	71.6% →	Severe →
CARO	Nigeria	4 →	5 →	23%	50.9 ↓	Open →	29.9% →	—	48.9% →	58.8% →	Severe →
EARO	Ethiopia	4 ↑	5 →	23.2%	39.8 ↓	Limited →	44.9%	--	54.9%	58%	Severe ↑
EARO	Kenya	3 →	3 →	6.7%	63.9 ↑	Limited →	49.8%	35.6%	46.3%	--	Severe →
EARO	Somalia	3 ↓	5 ↑	-0.3%	40.7 ↑	Limited →	35% ↓	--	52.9% ↓	68.3% ↓	Severe →
EARO	South Sudan	--	5 →	42%	72.2 ↑	Limited →	--	--	--	--	Severe ↑
EARO	Sudan	3 →	5 →	330.8%*	47.7 ↑	Limited →	--	--	--	--	Moderate ↑
EARO	Uganda	3 →	4 →	1.1%	52.8 ↓	Limited →	--	--	--	--	Severe →
EMECA	Afghanistan	3 →	5 →	5%	8.3 →	Open →	4.1% ↓	9.8% ↑	25.1% ↓	--	Severe →
EMECA	Lebanon	--	4 →	394.8%	92.6 ↑	Limited →	--	--	--	--	Moderate ↓
EMECA	Palestine	--	4	-5%	79.63	Open	--	--	--	--	Severe
EMECA	Syrian Arab Republic	--	5 →	15.6%	57.9 ↑	Limited →	24.6% ↑	54.5% ↑	30.3% ↓	--	Severe →
EMECA	Yemen	3 ↓	5 →	--	28.7 ↑	Limited →	29% ↓	50.8% ↓	55.9% ↓	--	Moderate ↓
LACRO	Brazil	--	3	--	70.8	Limited	--	--	--	--	
LACRO	Colombia [‡]	--	4 ↓	5%	81.5 ↑	Limited →	49.8% ↑	45.8% ↓	33.10% ↓	--	Severe →
LACRO	Ecuador [‡]	--	3 →	-0.4%	65.3 ↑	Open →	--	--	--	--	Severe →
LACRO	El Salvador	3 →	3 →	0.10%	42.6 ↓	Limited →	33% ↑	16.6% ↓	31.1% ↓	--	Severe →
LACRO	Guatemala	3 →	4 →	10.25%	54.6 ↑	Limited →	47.2% ↓	24.4% ↓	50% ↓	--	Severe →
LACRO	Haiti	3 →	4 →	22.5%	38 ↓	Limited →	7.5% ↓	--	39.4% ↑	60.7% ↓	Moderate ↓
LACRO	Honduras	3 →	4 →	4.1%	82.4 ↓	Limited →	64.8% ↓	37.9% ↓	47.3% ↑	--	Severe →
LACRO	Nicaragua	3	--	5.9%	8.3	Limited	--	--	--	--	Severe →
LACRO	Peru [‡]	--	3 →	2.7%	83.3 ↑	Limited →	--	--	--	--	Severe →
LACRO	Venezuela	--	5 →	2795%	88 →	Limited →	--	--	--	--	Severe →
SARO	Madagascar	3 ↑	3 →	4.8%	34.3 ↓	Limited →	29.2% ↑	--	46.5% ↓	47.4% ↓	Severe →
SARO	Mozambique	3 →	4 →	12.7%	55.6 ↓	Limited →	31.3% ↑	--	29.6% ↑	56.4% ↑	Severe →
SARO	Zimbabwe	2 →	4 →	359%	57.4 ↓	Limited →	26.3% ↑	--	42% ↓	82% ↑	Severe →
WARO	Burkina Faso	3 →	4 →	5.6%	30.6 ↑	Open →	--	--	34.7% ↓	36.6% ↑	Moderate →
WARO	Liberia	--	--	14%	40.7	Open	39.1%	--	56.4%	64.7%	Severe
WARO	Mali	3 →	5 ↑	2.7%	48.2 ↑	Open →	37.1% ↑	--	62.1% ↑	45.8% ↑	Moderate →
WARO	Niger	3 →	4 →	10.70%	34.3 ↓	Open →	12.1% ↓	--	52.9% ↓	32.1% ↓	Moderate →
WARO	Sierra Leone	--	--	15.10%	50.9	Limited	59.2%	--	56.3%	74.8%	Severe

[‡]Venezuelan migrants

Note: →: An arrow to the right indicates no change (→), an arrow down indicates improvement (↓), whereas an arrow up indicates an increase or deterioration (↑)

DATA SOURCES AND RATIONALE FOR INCLUSION:

1. **Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) scores:** scores provide scale of magnitude and severity of acute food insecurity in the country; highest level IPC predicted through October 2021 included in this analysis. IPC scores are generally broken down to the subnational (e.g., country, province, department, etc.) level.
2. **GCSI scores:** aggregate score to measure the impact of a humanitarian crisis, a primary driver of food insecurity globally. April 2021 scores from ACAPS provided.
3. **Food or Headline Inflation:** per WFP, food inflation reflects the year-on-year percentage change in the cost of purchasing a basket of goods and services that may be fixed or changed at specified intervals (e.g., yearly). Headline inflation considers goods such as food and energy, which can be volatile and are more prone to inflationary spikes.
4. **Oxford COVID Government Response Stringency Index:** a composite measure to help compare governments' responses during COVID-19. The measure is a simple additive score of nine indicators measured on an ordinal scale (e.g., school closures, workplace closures, and travel bans), rescaled to a value from 0 to 100 (100 = strictest). Early December 2020 indices are provided.
5. **Country Cargo Entry Status:** land, sea, and air cargo entry point updates (e.g., open, limited, or closed) from the Logistics Cluster, updated April 2021. This helps demonstrate the movement of goods between countries, which may impact a country's food security status (e.g., limited access to imported staple foods could drive acute food insecurity in countries with limited agricultural production, such as Lebanon).
- 6-9. **Market Access, Food Coping Strategies, Healthcare Access, and Emergency Livelihoods Coping Strategies:** as reported in the latest WFP COVID-19 Hunger Snapshots; only select countries have reported data. Provides relevant food security updates related to market access, negative food coping strategies (e.g., eating less meals), and emergency or crisis livelihoods coping strategies (e.g., spending from savings or borrowing money).