



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



World Food  
Programme

# Hunger Hotspots

FAO-WFP early warnings  
on acute food insecurity

March to July 2021 outlook



Global Network  
Against Food Crises

Integrated  
actions for  
lasting solutions

**REQUIRED CITATION**

**WFP and FAO.** 2021. *Hunger Hotspots. FAO-WFP early warnings on acute food insecurity: March to July 2021 outlook.* Rome.

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The report is developed jointly by the WFP Emergency Operations Division, the WFP Research, Assessment and Monitoring Division, the FAO's Early Warning Early Action Team (EWEA), the FAO's Global Information Early Warning System Team (GIEWS), and FAO's regional and country offices.

ISBN 978-92-5-134169-8 (FAO)

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# Acronyms

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<b>CARI</b>	Consolidated Approach to Reporting Indicators of Food Security
<b>CH</b>	<i>Cadre Harmonisé</i>
<b>COVID-19</b>	Coronavirus disease 2019
<b>ECLAC</b>	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
<b>EVD</b>	Ebola virus disease
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
<b>FEWS NET</b>	Famine Early Warning Systems Network
<b>FSNAU</b>	Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit
<b>GDP</b>	Gross domestic product
<b>GRFC</b>	Global Report on Food Crises
<b>HRP</b>	Humanitarian Response Plan
<b>IDP</b>	Internally displaced persons
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>IPC</b>	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organization
<b>NSAG</b>	Non-state armed group
<b>OCHA</b>	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>RRP</b>	Regional Response Plan
<b>SOFI</b>	The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNHAS</b>	United Nations Humanitarian Air Service
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>WASH</b>	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
<b>WB</b>	World Bank
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme

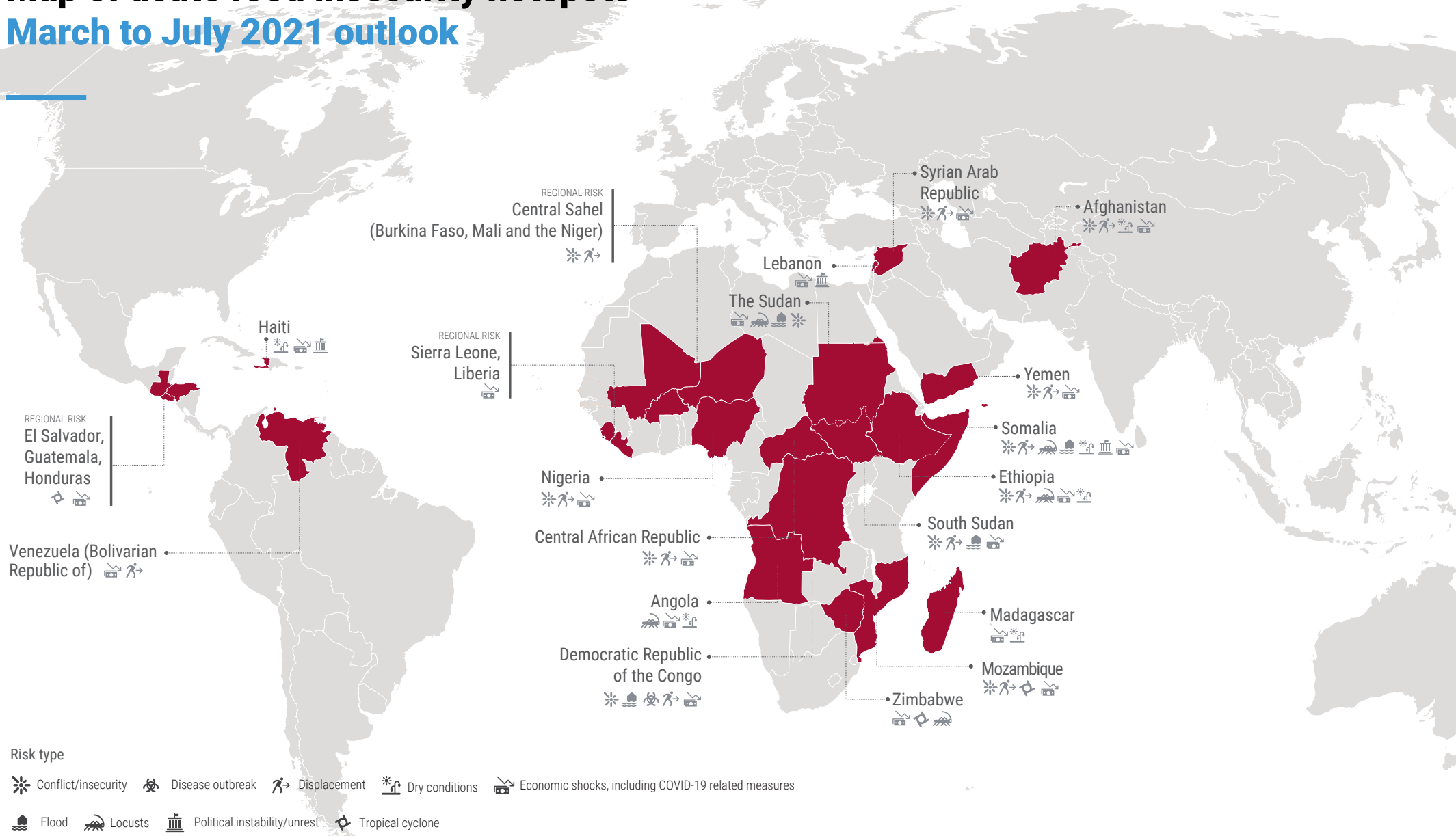
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# Map of acute food insecurity hotspots

## March to July 2021 outlook



Source: FAO and WFP, March 2021. Map conforms to United Nations World map, October 2020.

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on these map(s) do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of FAO concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers and boundaries. Dashed lines on maps represent approximate border lines for which there may not yet be full agreement. Dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties. Final boundary between the Sudan and South Sudan has not yet been determined. Final status of the Abyei area is not yet determined.

# Executive Summary



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The FAO-WFP Hunger Hotspots report is a forward-looking, early-warning analysis of countries and situations, called hotspots, where acute food insecurity is likely to deteriorate over the coming months. These hotspots are identified through a consensus-based analysis of key drivers of food insecurity, and their likely combination and evolution across countries and regions.

Looking at the outlook period of March–July 2021, there are 20 countries and situations where there is a likelihood of further deterioration in acute food insecurity, due to multiple drivers of hunger that are interlinked or mutually reinforcing. These are primarily conflict dynamics, economic shocks, the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19, weather extremes and the diffusion of plant pests and animal diseases.

A specific group of hotspots – Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Haiti, Honduras, Nigeria, the Sudan, South Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen and Zimbabwe – are particularly concerning due to the scale, severity and trends of the existing food crises. In some areas of these countries, parts of the population are experiencing a critical hunger situation, with extreme depletion of livelihoods,

insufficient food consumption and high acute malnutrition. In such fragile contexts, any further shocks could push a significant number of people over the brink and into destitution and even starvation.

Yemen, South Sudan and northern Nigeria represent highest alert level for this outlook period due to a combination of factors resulting in a risk of famine. In South Sudan's Jonglei state and certain areas in Yemen – people are already facing famine-like conditions. These factors include high percentages of the population living in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) food insecurity, heavy constraints to humanitarian access, and a likelihood of worsening food insecurity levels due to conflict, economic blows and climate shocks. Urgent and at-scale targeted humanitarian action is needed to prevent hunger or death in these most at-risk situations and to safeguard the most vulnerable communities.

The report provides country-specific recommendations on priorities for emergency response, as well as anticipatory action to address existing humanitarian needs and ensure short-term protective interventions before new needs materialize. These actions are strongly recommended to save lives, protect the livelihoods of the most vulnerable populations and prevent further human suffering.



# Introduction

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) are issuing an early warning for urgent humanitarian action in 20 countries and situations – called “hotspots” – where parts of the populations are likely to face a fast deterioration of high acute food insecurity\* that will put their lives and livelihoods at risk.

Identified through forward-looking analysis, the hotspots have potential for acute food insecurity to rise in the outlook period March–July 2021, under the effects of one or multiple drivers, often interlinked or mutually reinforcing. These are chiefly economic shocks and the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19, weather extremes, conflict dynamics, diffusion of plant pests and animal diseases. Targeted humanitarian action is needed to prevent hunger or death in these most at-risk situations and to safeguard the most vulnerable communities. To this end, the report also provides country-specific recommendations on priorities for: 1) anticipatory action, meaning short-term protective interventions to be implemented before new humanitarian needs materialize; and 2) emergency response, meaning actions to address existing humanitarian needs.

Already in 2019, 135 million people were facing a food Crisis or worse (Phase 3 or above of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification [IPC] or *Cadre Harmonisé* [CH]) in 55 countries and territories. An additional 183 million were classified in Stress conditions (IPC/ CH Phase 2) across 47 countries, with a risk of further deterioration.<sup>1</sup> This was largely a result of conflict and insecurity, weather extremes, economic shocks or a combination of these. While the next Global Report on Food Crises will be launched in April 2021 by the Global Network Against Food Crises, a significant increase in the numbers of people in acute food insecurity is evident through new IPC analyses or similar analytical processes in countries where the IPC/CH analyses have not been undertaken, with 174 million people in IPC Phase 3 or worse in the 58 countries covered. Of absolute urgent and imminent concern today are more than 34 million people in IPC Phase 4 across the world who already face emergency levels of acute food insecurity. These deteriorating trends were again caused by conflict and insecurity, weather extremes, economic shocks or a combination of these, compounded by the effects of COVID-19.

\*High food insecurity refers to acute food insecurity at crisis or worse levels (IPC phases 3 and above)

Given a strict set of methodological parameters, the hotspot countries were selected through a consensus-based process, which involved WFP and FAO Rome-based and field-based teams. The parameters used in the forward-looking analysis included:

- assessed levels of recent or current food insecurity and malnutrition, with a focus on high acute food insecurity and deterioration in comparison to the previous year;
- assessed projections of acute food insecurity for the outlook period, based on analysis of:
  - a. primary and secondary drivers: economic shocks, adverse climate conditions and weather shocks, conflict and insecurity, political instability, diffusion of plant pests and animal diseases; and
  - b. the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19. This includes direct impacts, such as those caused by border closures, travel restrictions, limits to mobility; and indirect impacts caused by decline in global demand, reduced foreign direct investments, aid and remittances, and current indebtedness levels, among others;
- presence of natural hazards, economic and conflict risks that are likely to drive up food insecurity levels even further, by having a direct impact on food insecurity (such as unforeseen climatic shocks destroying crops) or an indirect one (for example, increased internal displacement limiting people’s access to food);
- absolute numbers of people projected to be highly acute food insecure and the prevalence of high acute food insecurity on the overall analysed population;
- macro-economic stability and percentage of food imports on total food requirements;
- planned and ongoing agricultural activities during the March–July period, and existing or likely disruptions caused by COVID-19-related restrictions; and
- presence of operational and humanitarian access constraints.



The main sources of data on acute food insecurity (current and projections) are the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification and the *Cadre Harmonisé*. For countries where IPC/CH analyses were not conducted and where no recent analyses were available, estimates of the number of people in acute food insecurity were primarily derived from the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) IPC-compatible analysis; WFP assessments using the Consolidated Approach for Reporting Indicators of Food Security, or CARI; and from humanitarian needs overviews.<sup>2</sup> WFP’s open-access Hunger Map actual data on insufficient food consumption was used to inform trend analysis, and as a triangulation tool during the assessment phase.

Some countries and situations of high concern could not be comparatively assessed, for reasons including unavailability of food

insecurity data, comparable projections or food insecurity trends, for example in Myanmar and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

The report is divided into two sections: an overview of upcoming trends in the 20 hotspots, including countries of highest concern, and an analysis of the dynamics at play in the hotspots. The latter includes a list of country- or context-specific “anticipatory action and emergency response recommendations” that should be urgently implemented to mitigate or prevent the further deterioration of acute food insecurity.

The cut-off date for the analysis contained in this report is 28 February 2021.

This report is part of a series of analytical products produced under the Global Network Against Food Crises initiative, to enhance and coordinate the generation and sharing of evidence-based information and analysis for preventing and addressing food crises. In April 2021, the Global Network, in collaboration with the Food Security Information Network, will release the 2021 Global Report on Food Crises; this will provide further information on global acute food-insecurity figures in 2020. It will be available at [www.fightfoodcrises.net](http://www.fightfoodcrises.net) and [fsinplatform.org](http://fsinplatform.org).

### IPC/CH acute food insecurity phase description and response objectives

PHASE	TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION	PRIORITY RESPONSE OBJECTIVE
<b>1 None/Minimal</b>	Households are able to meet essential food and non-food needs without engaging in atypical and unsustainable strategies to access food and income	Resilience building and disaster risk reduction.
<b>2 Stressed</b>	Households have minimally adequate food consumption but are unable to afford some essential non-food expenditures without engaging in stress-coping strategies.	Disaster risk reduction and protection of livelihoods.
<b>3 Crisis</b>	Households either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have food consumption gaps that are reflected by high or above-usual acute malnutrition; OR</li> <li>• Are marginally able to meet minimum food needs but only by depleting essential livelihood assets or through crisis-coping strategies.</li> </ul>	<b>URGENT ACTION REQUIRED</b> to protect livelihoods and reduce food consumption gaps.
<b>4 Catastrophe/Hunger</b>	Households either:	

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