The Geopolitics of Food Security

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EU presentation, Brussels, May 24th, 2024
Global chronic hunger has increased in all regions of the world between 2014 and 2022, now affecting almost 750 million people.

- Under no plausible scenario will SDG target 2.1 to end hunger by 2030 be met.
- COVID-19, supply chain disruptions and the Ukraine war have provided major setbacks in 2020-2023.
- ... but reversal of trends started well before that driven by:
  - Civil strife/conflict
  - Climate change
  - Economic shocks

The same drivers are behind the rise in # of people facing crisis-level or worse acute food insecurity, which has almost tripled since 2016

- The EU-supported Global Report on Food Crises shows an increase of people in acute food crisis from 105M to 282M between 2016 and 2023
- Almost two thirds are facing protracted food crises in fragile settings
Driver: #1 Conflict
Conflict is a key cause of acute food insecurity

In 2023-24:
- Conflict was a major driver in 20 countries pushing 135M people in severe acute food insecurity
Conflict is on the rise, but most is still intra-state, civil strife

- ... though becoming increasingly internationalized
- ... more than half of the rise in global hunger since 2013 happened in fragile and conflict-affected states

Fragile and conflict-affected states account for more than 50% of increase in global chronic hunger since 2013 (millions of people)
Major acute food insecurity crises by # people (in IPC3+) and prevalence in 2023 – all facing conflict situations

- Democratic Republic of the Congo: 25.8M
- Nigeria: 24.9M
- Sudan: 20.3M
- Afghanistan: 18.9M
- Ethiopia: 18.7M
- Yemen: 18.0M
- Syrian Arab Republic: 12.9M
- Bangladesh: 11.0M
- Pakistan: 11.5M
- Myanmar: 10.7M

Share of analyzed population:
- Palestine (Gaza Strip): 100%
- South Sudan: 62%
- Yemen: 56%
- Syrian Arab Republic: 55%
- Haiti: 49%
- Afghanistan: 48%
- Central African Republic: 44%
- Sudan: 42%
- Somalia: 39%
- Lebanon (residents): 38%
Driver: #2 Economic shocks
Economic shocks are another key cause of acute food insecurity

In 2023-24:

• Economic shocks were a major driver in 21 food crisis countries, especially through sharp food price inflation, causing severe food deficits for 75M people.
Ukraine war, economic shocks and global food security

- So, didn’t the Ukraine war have any impact?
- Yes, it did. It exacerbated the global food and fertilizer price shocks from post-COVID supply chain disruptions.....
- ... but international staple food prices have declined since mid-2022, falling below pre-Ukraine war levels by early 2023
- Global markets have adjusted, so war in Ukraine no longer the major, direct driver of global food insecurity

Source: IFPRI, Food Security Portal; based on FAO data
.... Yet, persistent high domestic food inflation continues to affect food access in low-income countries

- Despite lower international prices, domestic food inflation is still high.
- Coping with the impacts of COVID and the Ukraine war has caused fiscal and foreign-exchange constraints in many low-income countries...
- .... causing debt distress, weakening currencies, and persistent high domestic food and general inflation.
- Hence, global shocks may be short lived, but “after shocks” may linger in contexts of poorer nations.

**Domestic (consumer) food price inflation, remains high, especially in LICs**

![Graph showing Domestic (consumer) food price inflation, Jan 2023 - March 2024 (in %; y-o-y)](Source: IFPRI, Food Security Portal; weighted averages for 152 countries)
Driver: #3 Climate change and weather extremes
Weather extremes are already a key cause of acute food insecurity

In 2023-24:

- El Niño was a major driver in 18 countries and compounding factor in 27 food crisis countries
- Causing mostly droughts, affecting the Horn of Africa and Eastern and Southern Africa the most
Climate change is considerably slowing agricultural productivity growth, affecting tropical agriculture the most.

Agricultural output in developing countries slowed in the 2010s as the rate of total factor productivity slowed ...

Growth will slow further with unabated climate change and per capita output in Africa is set to decline.

Per capita agricultural output for the World and SSA, with and without climate change.
Further concerning trends
Increasing numbers of displaced persons in food-crisis countries, compound acute food insecurity

- 64.3M IDPs in 38 countries
- 26M refugees and asylum-seekers in 56 countries
- 90.2M displaced people

- Sudan became the largest internal displacement crisis
- The highest proportion (75–85%) of IDPs was in the Gaza Strip
- In some contexts over 60% face high levels of acute food insecurity
Child malnutrition and “hidden hunger” (lack of micronutrients) is widespread

- Healthy diets too costly for billions
- Food assistance mainly focuses on caloric deficits

3 billion people cannot afford a healthy diet

Affordability of healthy diet remains elusive for more than one third of the world population

The situation in Gaza
## The situation in Gaza

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase 5</td>
<td>People in Catastrophe</td>
<td>378,000</td>
<td>576,000</td>
<td>677,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phase 4</td>
<td>People in Emergency</td>
<td>939,000</td>
<td>1,170,000</td>
<td>876,000</td>
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<td>Phase 3</td>
<td>People in Crisis</td>
<td>766,000</td>
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<td>578,000</td>
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<td>Phase 2</td>
<td>People Stressed</td>
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<td>25,000</td>
<td>96,000</td>
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<td>Phase 1</td>
<td>People in Food Security</td>
<td>-</td>
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</table>

Source: IPC Global Partners
Damages and impacts of the war in Gaza since October 2023

Data from UNRWA, FSIN 20204 Global Report on Food Crises
Some lessons for food crisis prevention and responsiveness
Lessons learned from acute food crises

- Early warning systems need to improve, allowing to monitor in real time and quickly identify causes
  - *IFPRI* is responding through EU-supported Food Security Portal
  - *It is important such mechanism is in place permanently to anticipate and prevent*

- Need to better measure actual food deficits in both caloric and micronutrient intake for more adequate food and nutrition assistance responses
Lessons learned from conflict?

- Supporting the recovery of people in Gaza and other conflict-affected settings (Haiti, Sudan, Yemen) requires multisectoral responses
  - Peacebuilding operations to create secure conditions for rebuilding livelihoods
  - Programmes for climate- and shock-resilient and inclusive agrifood-based livelihoods will reduce risk of conflict
  - Livelihoods-oriented relocation or settlement strategies plans for displaced people
Thank you for your attention

For more information, see:
www.ifpri.org

www.foodsecurityportal.org

• **Special Blog Series**
• **Special Indicator Series**
  • Food and Fertilizer Export Restrictions Tracker
  • Excessive Food Price Volatility Early Warning System
  • Staple Food Stock-Use Monitoring System
  • Vulnerability Dashboard
  • Fertilizer Market Dashboard
  • Food security and nutrition dashboard
Additional slides
Acute malnutrition continues to worsen in food-crisis countries

26.6M children under 5 years with MAM

9.8M children under 5 years with SAM

36.4M in 32 food-crisis countries

Most are in large food crises:
- Nigeria
- Ethiopia
- Afghanistan
- DRC
- Sudan

Alarming deterioration among children in the North Gaza:
- 31% acutely malnourished
- 4% severely
Conflict consistently identified as major driver

### FIG. 1.9 Numbers of people in IPC/CH Phase 3 or above or equivalent by primary driver, 2018–2023

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2021</th>
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<th>2023</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conflict/</td>
<td>73.9M</td>
<td>77.1M</td>
<td>99.1M</td>
<td>139.1M</td>
<td>117.1M</td>
<td>134.5M</td>
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<tr>
<td>insecurity</td>
<td>21 countries</td>
<td>22 countries</td>
<td>23 countries</td>
<td>24 countries</td>
<td>19 countries</td>
<td>20 countries</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weather</td>
<td>28.8M</td>
<td>33.8M</td>
<td>15.7M</td>
<td>23.5M</td>
<td>56.8M</td>
<td>71.9M</td>
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<tr>
<td>extremes</td>
<td>26 countries</td>
<td>25 countries</td>
<td>15 countries</td>
<td>8 countries</td>
<td>12 countries</td>
<td>18 countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>10.2M</td>
<td>24.0M</td>
<td>40.5M</td>
<td>30.2M</td>
<td>83.9M</td>
<td>75.2M</td>
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<td>shocks</td>
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<td>8 countries</td>
<td>17 countries</td>
<td>21 countries</td>
<td>27 countries</td>
<td>21 countries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2023:

73 pre-identified as food crisis countries

59 countries with data

281.6M People in IPC3 or worse

44 countries in major food crisis (of which 19 in protracted major crisis)
Long-lasting devastation to livelihoods from damage to agricultural lands in Gaza

Rob Vos and Soonho Kim

The population of Gaza is on the brink of famine

Rob Vos

Famine in Gaza

Rob Vos, Ismahane Elouafi, and Johan Swinnen

Impacts of Red Sea shipping disruptions on global food security

Joseph Glauber and Abdullah Mamun

Six research questions about the famine in Gaza – Nature Food

Rob Vos, Ismahane Elouafi, & Johan Swinnen
IFPRI’s work on Sudan

- In February 2024 IFPRI held a conference in collaboration with UNDP, WFP and USAID on “Navigating Sudan’s Conflict-research insights & policy implications.”
  - This helped provide food and nutrition insecurity and reconstruction options to development, policy, private sector, civil society and humanitarian actors.

- IFPRI collaborated with WFP on a randomized control trial study to assess the efficacy of different modalities of assistance provision (cash vs. in-kind) amidst ongoing conflict.
IFPRI’s work on Yemen

- In Yemen, IFPRI’s research informed the decision to expand a **cash for nutrition intervention** and informed feasibility of school feeding modalities.

- IFPRI is undertaking an **RCT** of geographical targeting of a bundle of cash transfers, nutrition, training, public works, and savings groups.

- Other RCTs underway:
  - Solar powered irrigation, drip irrigation package, and horticultural training to farmers
  - Adding fortified UHT milk to school feeding packages (in partnership with HSA Group and Tetrapak)
  - Public works program including randomization of complementary training and asset transfer interventions.
IFPRI’s work in Myanmar

- IFPRI’s program in Myanmar has informed international partners’ program designs and priorities such as the new Livelihoods and Food Security Fund (LIFT) Strategy 2022-2024.

- IFPRI has worked with local partners to provide an estimate of the “Persons in Need” in the country.

- New IFPRI book: Myanmar’s Agrifood Systems: Historical Development, Recent Shocks, Future Opportunities