



FOOD INSECURITY AND HUNGER IN AFRICA

Information Bulletin - April 2021

Key figures



100+ million people facing catastrophic levels of food insecurity.



4.3 million people assisted by Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies with food and in-kind assistance.



112,000 people reached with cash and voucher assistance.



20 African National Societies are implementing longer-term food security programmes with an investment of 81.14 Swiss francs, supported by 17 different partners.

Overview of the situation

It is a very concerning situation that over 100 million people in Africa are facing catastrophic levels of food insecurity (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification-3 and above) and the situation may worsen in the coming months especially between June and August 2021. The socio-economic impacts of Covid-19 have become wider and deeper especially in developing countries.

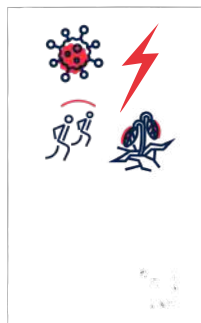
The secondary impacts of COVID-19 could have long-lasting affects across the continent, particularly for those living in poverty.

In Africa, a continent with a high proportion of workers in the informal economy, the most vulnerable have been hit hard. In Africa, people face the challenges of either too little water or too much water – cyclic patterns of drought to floods to droughts – impacting vulnerable groups either by floods or by famine silently due to profound impacts of climate change.

People are becoming more vulnerable due to civil unrest, displacements, population movement and other complex socio-political and economic factors.

Food insecurity hotspots

West Africa and Sahel
3.2+ million people



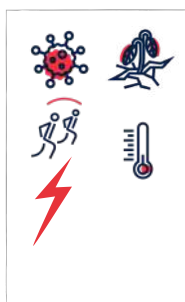
South Sudan
7.2 million people



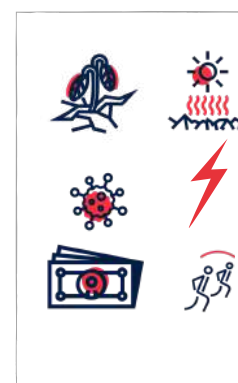
Kenya and Somalia
4.1 million people





DRC 27.3 million people





Mozambique and Madagascar
1.5+ million people





 IFRC food security and livelihood programmes (supported countries)

 Displacement and related impacts


 Armed conflict and related impacts


 Failed or failing harvest and impacted food availability


 Floods and related impacts

 Locusts and related impacts

 Drought conditions

 Ebola and related impacts

 Flash floods and related impacts

 Covid-19 and related impacts



OVERVIEW

The Africa region has experienced food insecurity for a long period of time with the main driving factors being conflict, insecurity, locust infestation, consecutive failed rainfall seasons, climatic factors (El Nino, Indian Ocean Dipole Induced) market instability and disasters contributing to low nutritious food production and accessibility.

The COVID-19 situation has also been the pre-dominant driver of high acute food insecurity in both rural and urban areas, in most African countries.

Areas of concern in the region include the following:

- The Democratic Republic of Congo,
- The Greater Horn of Africa (Parts of Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya and Sudan and South Sudan),
- The Sahel (Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Mauritania and Senegal),
- North East Nigeria, Central Africa Republic, and;
- Most regions of Southern Africa (specifically Angola, Mozambique and Madagascar).

Based on the Famine Early Warning Systems Network's Integrated Phase Classification (FEWS NET IPC) assessment maps of acute food insecurity near term February to May and midterm June to September 2021 have been prepared (annex 1).

The following is a summary of countries highlighted in recognised references as areas of concern in the coming months.



EAST AFRICA

In Eastern Africa crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse outcomes are expected through at least May 2021 across much of the region (North East Somalia, South Sudan, Ethiopia – including the Tigray region) attributed to conflict and displacement, long term macro-economic challenges, the economic impacts of COVID-19, multiple weather shocks and ongoing desert locust upsurge. Food availability and access remain below normal and are contributing to atypically high food assistance. Rainfall has been erratic, and local harvests are either below the five-year average or insufficient to cover national demand.

For Somalia, up to 20 per cent of the population (2.7 million people) face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) levels of food insecurity or worse between April and June, up from 1.6 million currently. This includes about 400,000 people in emergency (IPC Phase 4).

Overall, the food security situation in Kenya has also worsened. Findings from the short rain's assessment carried out by the Kenya Food Security Steering Group indicate that 1.4 million people in arid and semi-arid parts of Kenya need food assistance.

In addition, 541,662 children and 98,759 pregnant and lactating women require nutritional support. In the urban areas, 1.1 million Kenyans require humanitarian assistance following the loss of their income and livelihoods due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is expected that crop production will be 20-40 per cent below normal. The Kenyan Government has warned that millions of Kenyans are likely to face hunger because of the Covid-19 pandemic and the drought currently being experienced in parts of the country. The Government reported that an estimated 1.4 million Kenyans are currently facing hunger, a figure that is likely to rise in the coming days if a solution is not found. The situation is worse in parts of the arid and semi-arid counties of northern Kenya where drought and lack of food subsidies has put a number of families at risk.

In the north-east of Kenya and the neighbouring region in Somalia, families are facing an alarming drought situation, with depleted water points (shallow wells, boreholes and water pans), reduced crop production and dried-up pasture.

Combined with a deterioration of the security situation, the socio-economic impact of COVID-19, desert locusts and an outbreak of livestock disease, there is a high risk of deterioration of the already very fragile food security situation. Other counties of northern Kenya are also affected. The local authorities on both sides of the border have called for support from the central Governments, NGOs and humanitarian donors, particularly in the field of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), food security, livestock supplementary feeds, nutrition and protection.

According to Somalia NGO Consortium, a severe drought is looming in Somalia amid ongoing challenges of the third wave of COVID-19, locust infestations and political instability making the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance at risk of escalating rapidly. One in five Somalis or 2.7 million people will need humanitarian assistance without a scale-up of emergency response. This represents a 69 per cent increase from 1.6 million on the same date last year. The conditions and risks are similar to pre-drought conditions in 2017, except that in that year Somalis were not faced with a pandemic and a locust infestation.

For South Sudan during the upcoming lean season (April to July), a total of 7.2 million people (60 per cent of the population) are expected to face high acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 and above). This includes 2.4 million in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) and 108, 000 people in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5).



SOUTHERN AFRICA

The region is prone to recurrent extreme climatic shocks and has experienced average rainfall in only one of the last five cropping seasons. As a result, 2019 was the year with the region's highest acute food insecurity situation in the past decade. This led the Government and international actors to provide humanitarian support. Disasters are closely linked and interconnected thus shaping the broader regional economic, social, and demographic context.

According to the figures the updated 2020 Synthesis Report, the figures presented by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Secretariat in October 2020 estimate that close to 51.3 million people in both urban and rural areas of southern Africa are food insecure.

Around 45 million people in countries of the Southern African Development Community region are facing high levels of acute food insecurity.

In particular, around 27.3 million people or one in three people in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) are experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above), including nearly seven million people grappling with emergency levels of acute hunger (IPC 4), according to the latest Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) analysis making the central African country the host of the highest number of people in urgent need of humanitarian assistance in the world.

The food security situation remains dire with one in three people - a record high - suffering from acute hunger, two United Nations agencies, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) warned. "Crisis" (IPC Phase 3) and "stressed" (IPC Phase 2) outcomes persist across Mozambique, due to the conflict and displacement in Cabo Delgado; below-average rainfall in the intermediate and coastal areas of Nampula and Cabo Delgado; flooding; and damage from tropical storm Chalane and cyclone Eloise.

Much of the coast of Madagascar remains abnormally dry while drought continues to persist in the Southern parts of the coast. From November 2020 to January 2021, the Grand Sud was affected by the most severe drought since 1981. People in the Grand Sud of Madagascar are now facing the peak of the hunger gap season. An estimated 1.14 million people in the Grand Sud and 203,453 in the south-east of the country will be severely food insecure (IPC phases 3 and 4) from January to April 2021, according to the last Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysis.

Significantly below average and uneven rainfall since the beginning of the rainfall season has led to abnormal dryness and drought in Angola and north-western Namibia, where ground conditions are significantly degraded. Below-average rainfall during February has also led to abnormal dryness in parts of southern South Africa.



WEST AFRICA AND SAHEL

Outside of conflict affected areas most areas will remain food insecure: “minimal”(IPC Phase 1) until September 2021 and “stress” (Phase 2 of the CPI) for some, including many urban households hard hit by COVID-19 restrictions that have reduced the implementation of traditional livelihoods activities, resulting in declining incomes and purchasing power.

In areas affected by conflicts and civil insecurity, particularly in the Lake Chad, Liptako Gourma (the three border areas between Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali), North-East, North-Central and North-West Nigeria (Borno, Adamawa, Yobe, Kastina, Kaduna, Sokoto, Zamfara and Niger State), access to land and other means of production is limited.

This has resulted in the loss of household livelihoods, the destruction of social infrastructure (schools, health centres, etc.) and significant population movement (5.6 million).

In addition to this, there is inflation in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Ghana and Nigeria.

The March 2021 Cadre Harmonisé estimates 19 million people need immediate assistance (population in phase 3 or worse) in the Sahel and West Africa region for the current period (March to May 2021).

This number could increase to 27 million people for the projected period (June to August 2021), including 1.9 million in emergency phase (IPC 4 and 5). Countries with the highest rate of food insecure people includes 12.8 million people in Nigeria, 2.9 million in Burkina Faso, 2.3 million in Niger, 1.8 million in Chad and Sierra Leone, 1.3 million in Mali, more than 457, 000 people in Mauritania 488, 000 people in Senegal, and nearly one million in Liberia.



IN WEST AFRICA AND SAHEL, the food insecurity situation is unprecedented in terms of the scale of the increase it represents (currently and for the coming lean season), +159 per cent and +126 per cent respectively of people in acute food and nutrition insecurity compared to the five-year average (2015-2020).

Over one year, there is an increase of around 80 per cent for the current period, and 18 per cent for the lean season (June-August). This is despite a year considered as good in terms of rainfall conditions and agro-pastoral production.

In 2021, the nutritional situation also remains worrying in the West and Central African region. A total of 13,90 million cases of acute malnutrition (AMN) are projected among children under five years, of which about 30 per cent (4,31 million) are cases of severe acute malnutrition (SAM).

With regards to the ECOWAS countries, as well as Cameroon and Mauritania, 9,66 million GAM cases are expected, of which 3,08 million are severe acute malnutrition cases (SAM), showing an increase of +7 per cent compared to the five-year average (2015-2019).

External coordination and partnerships



Earlier this month, FAO and WFP called for U 5.5 billion US dollars to swiftly scale up actions and avert famine through a combination of humanitarian food assistance, cash and emergency livelihoods interventions. According to the call for action of absolute urgent and imminent concern are people in IPC Phase 4 who already face emergency levels of acute food insecurity and are highly vulnerable to face famine or famine-like conditions without urgent immediate life-saving action. These countries include the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Nigeria, South Sudan and Sudan. Other countries of concern include the Central African Republic and Zimbabwe.

The IFRC and African National Societies are actively working in collaboration with all key stakeholders and Governments in order to address the hunger issues in Africa assertively. The IFRC has embarked on a bold plan - the Pan-Africa Zero Hunger Initiative - which is designed to be focused, scalable and high impact, with concrete actions that build on the Red Cross Red Crescent added value and position. Three tiers were developed and are expected to deliver towards the ultimate Zero Hunger goal by 2030. This initiative is well aligned with SDG#2, AU's Regional Initiative on 'Africa's Commitment to End Hunger by 2025', AU's Agenda 2063, Governmental plans and other agencies' programmes.

In the Sahel, at the 2019 Sahel+ group general assembly, a new structure for coordination, collaboration and partnerships was approved, namely the Sahel+ Resilience Platform which includes all the same ten Sahel+ National Societies, IFRC, ICRC as well as interested partner National Societies and three reference centres: the Climate Centre, the Livelihoods Centre and the Centre for Cooperation with Africa. The Sahel+ Resilience Platform comprises of a steering committee and two technical groups, one of them is focused on food security and livelihoods.

Their ambition is to create a shared understanding and vision among members, to increase communication, information production and capacities, and to shape a collective voice through common advocacy tools and messages. As such, in 2019, 2020 and 2021, the Food Security and Livelihoods and Migration working groups have been partly financially supported (respectively) by the British Red Cross and the French Red Cross, through a hired coordinator position, and parts of the Food Security and Livelihoods Group action plan by the British Red Cross.



A volunteer assists with a Red Cross food distribution in Mabalane district, Mozambique. Rice, oil, corn flour and beans were distributed to 579 families in the district where El Nino weather conditions have crippled the country with a severe drought resulting in failed crops and increased hunger. (Photo: Aurélie Marrier d'Unienville/IFRC).

Red Cross Red Crescent actions

The IFRC continues to monitor the risks and crises affecting the entire Africa region, using a multi-hazard risk mitigation approach which ensures the responses to different disasters and crises are integrated, cross-cutting, and non-siloed.

The IFRC is currently using a number of tools to support Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies to respond to the hazards impacting their respective countries, including Emergency Appeals, Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF), and integration of response activities into existing projects and programmes.

The COVID-19 response is being implemented through existing programmes where possible, while other operations are integrating COVID-19 into their response plans.



Photo: Raveloarisoa Fanoeline, a Malagasy Red Cross volunteer verifies that the person's name is on the list of those receiving financial assistance from the Malagasy Red Cross. (Photo: iAko Randrianarivelo /IFRC.)



Cash-based interventions have also been implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic by many Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies in the Sahel region. They include Niger, Chad, Burkina Faso, Mali, Senegal, Mauritania and Gambia. Food insecurity has a cumulative negative impact on people's coping capacity. Droughts are a seasonal and recurring phenomenon, and in anticipation of the recurring events, Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies and communities prepare for response. Response triggers are determined by the extent and scale of these events.

This year the humanitarian context is much more complex, with droughts, flooding, epidemics, locust upsurge, and civil unrest coinciding with the COVID-19 pandemic. National Societies require exceptional strategies for COVID-19 preparedness and response. Where possible and relevant, the National Societies recognise connections with and integration of COVID-19 into other operations by packaging awareness messaging, maximising volunteers and staff bandwidth and reducing exposure to COVID-19. This tactic allows National Societies to operate within the Government-imposed travel and access restrictions to communities.

In Africa, 26 Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies have assisted 4.3 million people with food and in-kind assistance and 112,000 people have been reached with cash and voucher assistance. National Societies have been involved in supporting national social protection mechanisms or social safety nets.

In addition, the National Societies are undertaking other wide range of interventions. 20 African National Societies are implementing longer-term food security programmes with an investment of 81.14 Swiss francs, supported by 17 different partners.

IFRC has also integrated food security interventions with its humanitarian response operations such as Southern Africa - Food Insecurity Crisis (MDR63003), Niger - Complex Emergency (MDRNE021), Zambia - Food Insecurity (MDRZM012) and Mauritania - Food and Nutritional Insecurity (MDRMR011), and other floods response operations.

As a response to the locust upsurge an emergency appeal was launched (MDR60005) in 2020 and five National Societies – Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, and Uganda – were allocated start-up funds (50,000 Swiss francs each) to enable initial activities including assessments, training and engagement in locust surveillance, and reporting.

The operational strategy focuses on anticipation and preparedness to prevent further deterioration of the fragile food security situation in the targeted countries, which will have important negative impacts on the livelihoods of millions of already highly vulnerable populations.



Furthermore, on 29 November 2020, 249,900 Swiss francs was released from the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF MDRMG017), with an overall objective of improving the nutritional and food security conditions of 10,000 people (2,000 households) in Madagascar, Ambatoabo, Taolagnaro district (Anosy Region), through a harmonised emergency response while protecting their safety, wellbeing and dignity.

This DREF focuses on addressing the issue of food insecurity and malnutrition in the targeted community: access to food and basic needs/livelihoods; health/nutrition; and Water, Hygiene and Sanitation with an emphasis on access to drinking water, which is a real problem in the targeted commune (Ambatoabo).

These emergency actions will make it possible to follow up with a view to a long-term continuation with resilience activities by mobilizing the necessary resources through the upcoming Pan-African Food Security initiatives.

In January 2021, the Kenyan Red Cross Society (KRCS) in collaboration and with support from Finnish Red Cross, undertook a food security assessment in Garissa, Marsabit and Turkana counties.

Following the assessment, KRCS with support from King Salman Foundation has rolled out a one-off distribution of in-kind food targeting 7,500 most vulnerable households in Marsabit county.

With the WFP support, KRCS is undertaking in-kind food distribution in Tana River currently as well targeting 35,000 people. KRCS has also been taking part in coordination meetings with counties for planning of response operations to support affected communities. KRCS continues to engage other stakeholders for possible support to affected families.

As part of Tropical Cyclone Idai (MDRMZ014), 2019 and Tropical Cyclone Eloise (MDRMZ016), 2021 emergency appeals Mozambique Red Cross (CVM) continues to support some of the most vulnerable with food assistance.

A DREF (MDRNA012) was launched on 6 April 2021 to support Namibia Red Cross (NRC) respond to a migration crisis brought about by abnormal dryness hampering the 2020/21 rainy season, which typically runs from November to April.

Angolans living in the border provinces with Namibia, the Cunene and Huila, are experiencing food and water shortages due to persistent drought with malnutrition widespread amongst these communities.

The number of migrants has been growing steadily, adding up to over 800 people towards end of March 2021. Responding to the population movement situation, Namibia Red Cross (NRC) has activated its regional teams to monitor the situation and volunteers are working with the Ministry of Health and Social Services, conducting health education for the migrants, providing shelter, wash and health support.



The way forward

The pace and magnitude of hunger and famine are accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic and other compounded disasters. There is no time to waste – we call for urgent actions in terms of speed and scale. We call for collective bold actions by sequencing and layering humanitarian response to longer-term strategy towards the zero-hunger goal. Given that famine and hunger are humanitarian and developmental challenges as well as global security concern, it is necessary to undertake twin-track approach:

- Track 1: lifesaving humanitarian response for IPC 4 and above for acute crisis; and
- Track 2: longer-term programming in meeting the Zero Hunger Goal, per Pan Africa Zero Hunger initiatives, supporting SDG#2.

These two tracks will be overlapped and undertaken through a continuum of actions: from response to recovery; and from recovery to resilience building. For the track 2 (longer term approach to deal with hunger issue in Africa, the IFRC and its members started a bold Pan-Africa Zero Hunger Initiative. The IFRC's contribution to the regional efforts is to reduce hunger by 25 per cent in the next years. It will lift 25 per cent of vulnerable people in Africa from poverty and eradicate dependence on food assistance, by investing in food production and developing low-cost, effective, innovative, and smart livelihood alternatives that guarantee long-term food security. The Pan-Africa Zero Hunger Initiative is well aligned with SDG#2, AU's Regional Initiative on 'Africa's Commitment to End Hunger by 2025', AU's Agenda 2063, Governmental plans and other agencies' programmes.

The plan and the cost

Goal: To save lives, protect livelihoods, reduce poverty, and reach zero hunger for at least 25 per cent of vulnerable people in Africa by 2030.

Intermediate objective: To lift 25 per cent of vulnerable people in Africa from poverty and eradicate dependence on food assistance, by investing in food production and developing low-cost, effective, innovative, and smart livelihood alternatives that guarantee long-term food security.

Outcome 1: Localized efficient, innovative and smart local production, processing and storage by smallholder farmers meet or surpass local needs.

Outcome 2: Livelihoods are provisioned, protected and promoted through scaling-up use of multipurpose cash and harnessing all its advantages in all National Societies and suitable programming across Africa.

Outcome 3: Livelihoods are diversified and strengthened through entrepreneurship and Economies of Scale, with an emphasis on gender and youth development.

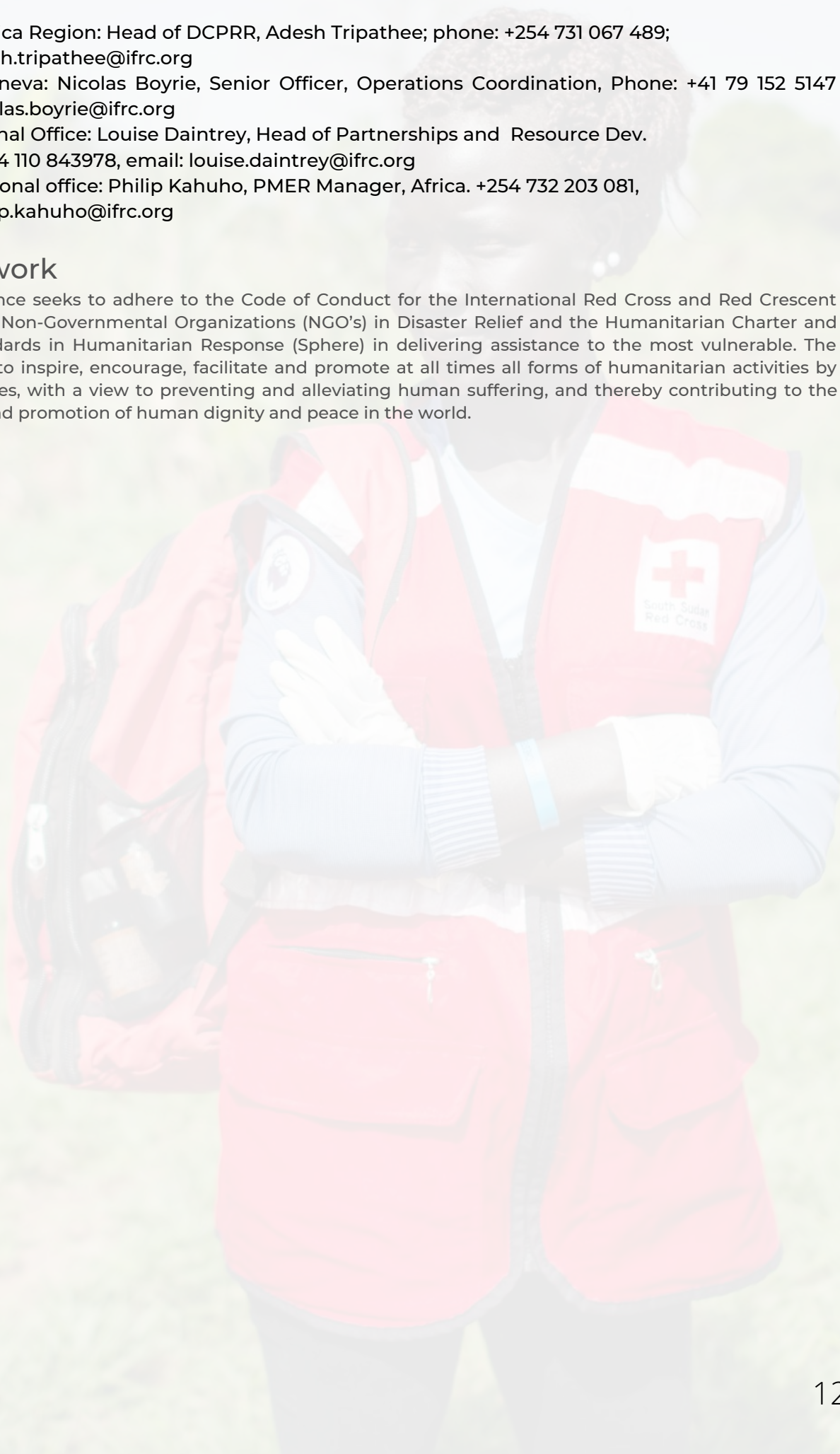
- **34 million Swiss francs** is required for immediate humanitarian intervention.
- Longer-term programming in meeting the Zero Hunger Goal, per Pan Africa Zero Hunger initiatives, supporting SDG#2. Current funding requirements to continue long term initiatives: **200 million Swiss francs.**

For further information, specifically related to this Information Bulletin please contact:

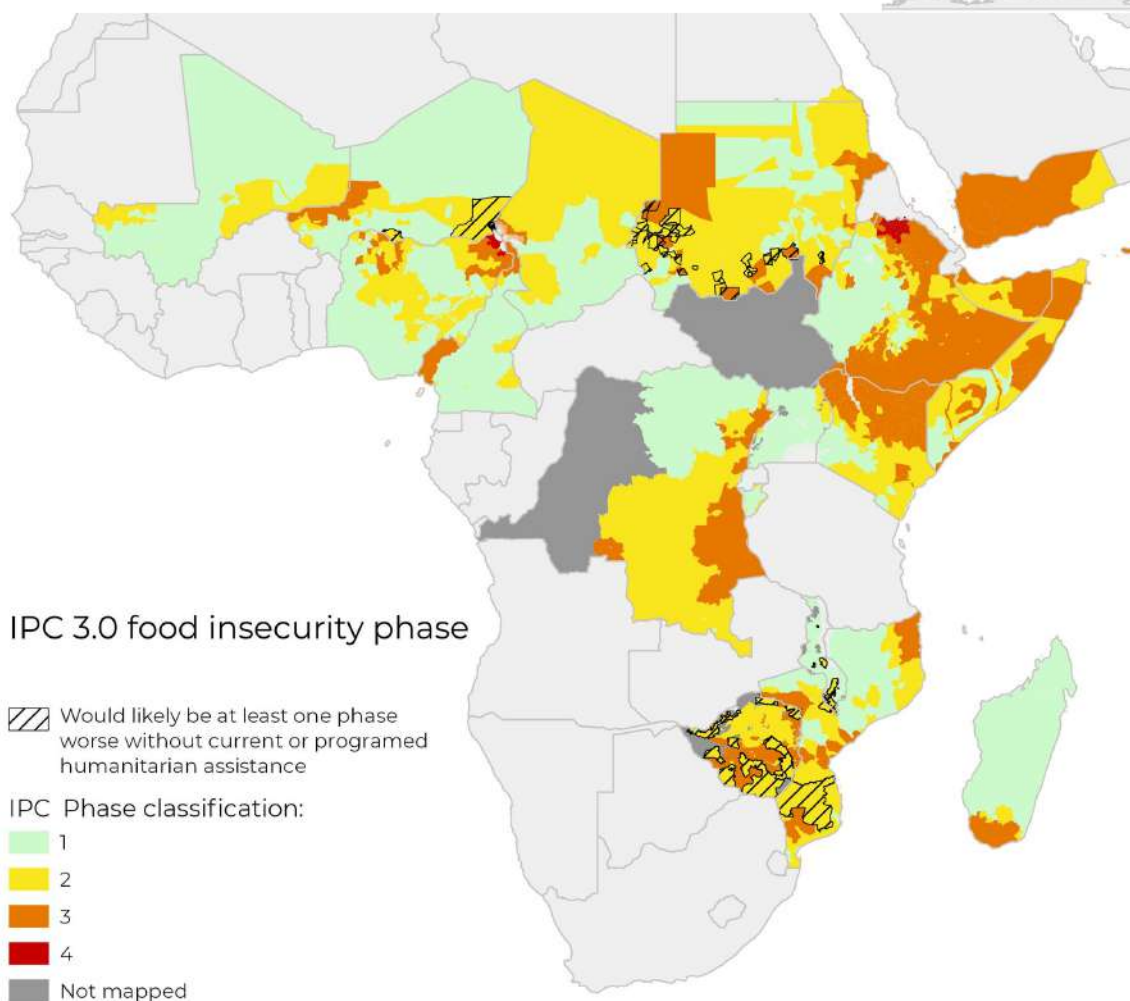
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How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in Disaster Relief and the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response (Sphere) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.



Acute food insecurity: Near term
FEWS Net IPC assessment (February/May 2021)

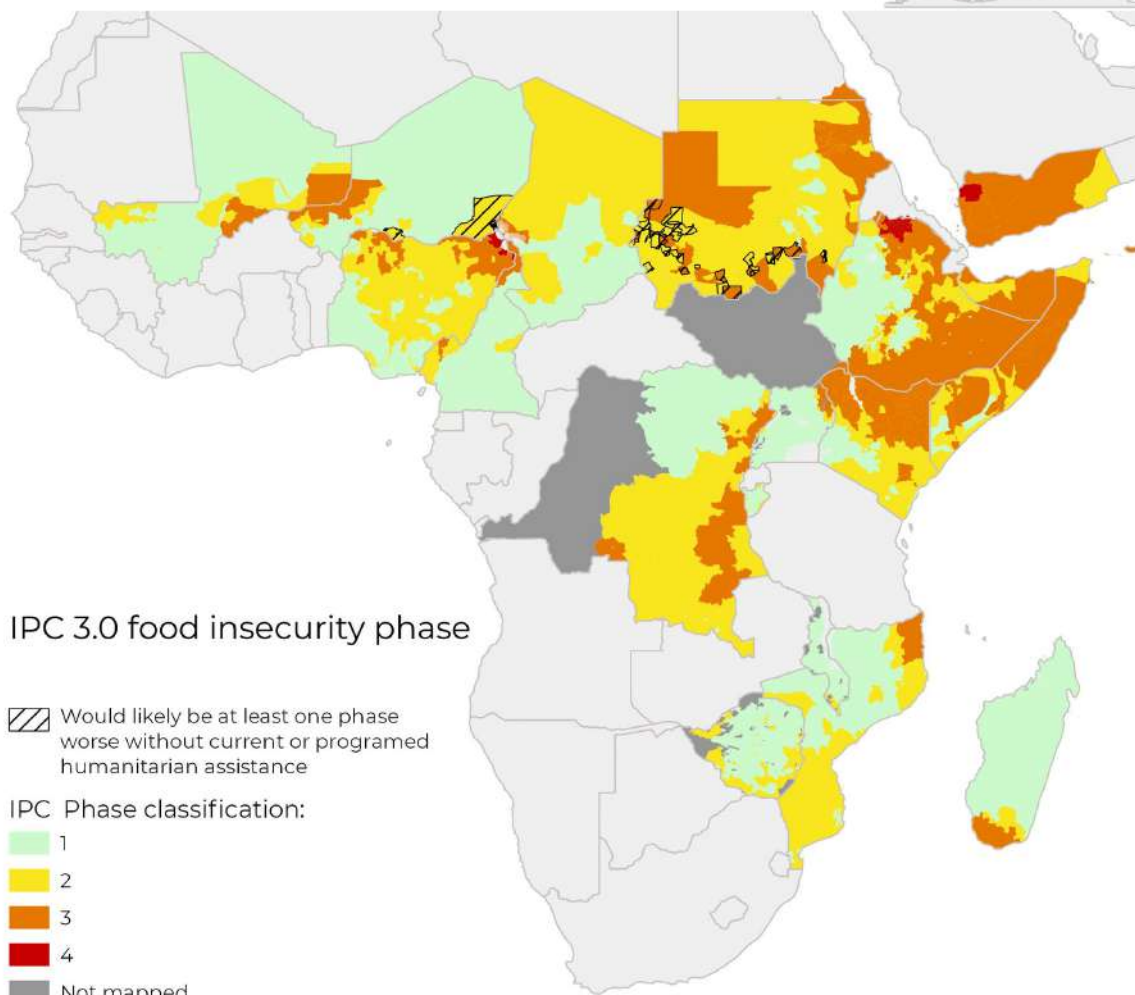


The maps used do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies or National Societies concerning the legal status of a territory or of its authorities.
Data from FEWSNET

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Acute food insecurity: Medium term
FEWS Net IPC assessment (June/September 2021)



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Data from FEWSNET

