

IPC GUIDANCE NOTE

IPC ALERTS

SEPTEMBER 2026

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

The IPC global initiative is committed to the humanitarian imperative and to providing analysis of food and nutrition crises where and when needed to inform response. However, there are **situations in which available data are insufficient to conduct an IPC analysis**. In these situations, **especially where information points to a rapid deterioration** that could lead to Famine (IPC Phase 5) conditions, the IPC has a duty to provide information as soon as possible to enable responses to save lives and alleviate human suffering. To operationalise its commitment to humanitarian and local response mechanisms and to provide timely information where and when needed, the IPC global initiative has developed Standard Operating Procedures for issuing IPC Alerts in such situations.

IPC Alerts serve as **a last resort to highlight specific humanitarian food and nutrition crises** and inform decision-making in extremely severe contexts where IPC analyses cannot be conducted within 30 days of receiving evidence indicating a rapidly deteriorating situation. Alerts are concise, standalone reports that highlight key events and data from IPC partners and other sources to draw global attention to unfolding situations. Alerts do not equate to IPC analyses. They are part of IPC's continuous efforts to monitor risks and prevent Famine, and can only be triggered in high-severity crises at Famine or near Famine levels.

ACTIVATION MODALITIES

The alert process may be initiated by the IPC Technical Working Group (TWG), IPC partners, the IPC Global Support Unit (GSU), or the Global Steering Committee, and is based on evidence of worsening or very severe conditions. Alerts are expected to remain exceptional, used only at low frequency and strictly as a last resort. Their careful and limited use is essential to maintaining the credibility and impact of full IPC analyses and updates. The primary aim is to prompt action from decision-makers to prevent catastrophic outcomes. Alerts are considered in the following situations.

- Alerts may be triggered in **Famine-related situations**. They are intended for the most severe circumstances, when evidence indicates that populations or areas are at, or approaching, Famine conditions.
- Alerts may also be warranted when credible evidence demonstrates **significant deterioration in key drivers**, including conflict, displacement, food availability, humanitarian access, market functioning, or other critical determinants of food security and nutrition outcomes.
- Furthermore, Alerts may be considered when the **absence of timely action on previous recommendations** from IPC analyses or Famine Review Committee (FRC) reports contributes to rapid deterioration, or when a previously identified Worst Case Scenario in an IPC risk of Famine analysis for a projection period begins to unfold instead of the Most Likely Scenario.

Upon receiving evidence of the above situations, the IPC GSU leads the consultation process to review available evidence and determine the feasibility of conducting an IPC analysis within 30 days. When an analysis is not possible or timely, an approval from the IPC Global Steering Committee is needed to produce an IPC Alert. It is also important to ensure that the entire Alert process, from activation to publication, does not exceed three weeks.



IPC ALERT PRODUCT

Although technical in nature, an **Alert does not introduce any new IPC classification or new population estimates**. It may, however, recall findings from previous analyses, where relevant. The Alert includes key messages and recommendations aimed at guiding decisions in the face of rapidly deteriorating conditions.

The Alert must be **evidence based, drawing on available data on contributing factors or new outcome information**. It focuses specifically on the area or areas of highest concern in order to ensure clear, targeted, and actionable messaging. While the Alert generally follows the layout of IPC snapshots, it features its own distinct branding and colour scheme to ensure clear differentiation from IPC analysis documents.

CONTACTS

For queries or to request support, contact the IPC Global Support Unit at info@ipcinfo.org.

¹*Sphere Standards: The Humanitarian Charter*. <https://spherestandards.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/the-humanitarian-charter.pdf>