**AFGHANISTAN: Integrated Food Security Phase Classification Snapshot | September 2021 - March 2022**

**Key Figures | Current Situation | September - October 2021**

- **18.8M** A record high of nearly 19 million Afghans are experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity, classified in Crisis or Emergency (IPC Phases 3 or 4) between September and October 2021.

- **4.2M** Increased conflict between January and September 2021 drove over 664,000 people out of their homes, disrupting their livelihood systems. With about 3.5 million Afghans already in displacement camps around the country, this brings the figure of internally displaced to around 4.2 million people.

- **22.8M** Between November 2021 and March 2022 (the winter lean season), a further deterioration in food security is expected, with the number of people in IPC Phase 3 or above likely increasing to 22.8 million, a nearly 35% increase from the same season last year (16.9 million).

**Overview**

Afghanistan’s protracted food crisis has deepened and widened with a record high of 4.2 million Afghans newly displaced. This adds to about 3.5 million Afghans already in displacement. Between November 2021 and March 2022, there will likely be a nearly 35% increase in the number of people in IPC Phase 3 or above, driven largely by a combination of conflict and climate factors, including colder than average winter months, a wetter winter season, intense winter storms, and lower spring wheat production.

Reduced income, lower international and domestic remittances and continuing displacement are expected to contribute to deteriorating food security. The estimated 55% population in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or above in the November 2021 – March 2022 projection period (lean season) is the highest ever recorded in the country. This record magnitude is predicted only by a 47% population classification in IPC Phase 3 or above in the November 2018 – February 2019 lean season.

**Key Drivers**

- **Drought:** Twenty-five out of 34 provinces were affected by a severe drought. Below-average cumulative precipitation during the wet season (October 2020 – May 2021) resulted in reduced snowfall, reducing water for cultivation.

- **Conflict:** Increased conflict between January and September 2021 drove over 664,000 people out of their homes, disrupting their livelihood systems. This adds to about 3.5 million Afghans already in displacement.

- **Economic Decline:** In the wake of Afghanistan’s political transition and the consequent freezing of US $9.3 billion in national assets, the economy plummeted. The banking system suffered severe disruption, and the national currency lost 12.5% of value, leading to high unemployment and food prices.

**Recommended Actions**

- **Humanitarian Assistance:** Urgent scale-up of lifesaving food assistance is imperative for the populations classified in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) and Emergency (IPC Phase 4) to prevent them from sliding into higher levels of food insecurity, including Crisis (IPC Phase 4) for the most food insecure.

- **Livelihood Support:** Scale-up of livelihood assistance for the winter wheat season, the spring season crops and vulnerable livestock households is essential to prevent further deterioration of household food production capacity in rural areas.

- **Focus on Women and Children:** Supporting women and children in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) and Emergency (IPC Phase 4) is a priority intervention. Programs targeting pregnant and lactating women and children under five should be a top priority.

**Comparison with the 2020 IPC Analysis**

Compared to the previous IPC analysis, there is a significant deterioration in the number of people experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity classified in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or above. However, it is worth noting that the previous IPC results, indicating 10.8 million people in the current period and 14.4 million people in the projection period being in IPC Phases 3 and 4, were based on the National Statistics and Information Authority (NSIA) population estimates (34 million). At the request of the humanitarian community in Afghanistan, this IPC report is based on Flowminder population estimates, which also are used for the annual Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), summing up to 41.7 million people in Afghanistan. Results from the present analysis show a 30% increase of people in IPC Phase 3 or above in the current period (September - October 2021) compared with the same time last year, and a 35% increase in the projection period (November 2021 - March 2022) compared to the 2020-2021 winter period. The prevalence of people in IPC Phase 4 facing Emergency levels of food insecurity rose by 55% (from 11% to 17%) in the current period from September to October 2021, compared to the same time last year and in the projection period by 57% (from 14% to 22%) compared to the same time last year.
Afghanistan has suffered some of the deadliest conflicts and recurrent natural disasters for over four decades, resulting in a protracted food crisis affecting millions of people. Food insecurity and hunger persist. Due to a combination of frequent shocks, including conflict, insecurity, population displacement, the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as natural disasters such as droughts, floods, crop pest invasions and earthquakes, millions of people do not have the resources to obtain enough nutritious food to lead healthy lives consistently.

Conflict and Population Displacement

The country has endured over 40 years of conflict, and armed fighting continues to rage, exposing civilians, particularly women and children, to deadly daily risks, exposing civilians, particularly women and children, to deadly daily risks, exposing civilians, particularly women and children, to deadly daily risks, exposing civilians, particularly women and children, to deadly daily risks. This is in addition to about 3.5 million Afghans who were already living in displacement camps across the country. Due to the severity of the conflict and its sudden nature, most of these vulnerable IDPs' livelihoods are lost or sold at low prices.

Natural Disasters

Afghanistan is prone to several natural disasters, including earthquakes, flooding, landslides and avalanches. Earthquakes are relatively frequent, more frequent in the north and northeast, often triggering landslides. Floods are common in the spring when snow begins to melt, and rainfall is heavy in the summer. Located in areas of high seismic activity, and given the rugged and mountainous nature of the country, the likelihood of villages, towns and cities, there is a high propensity for widespread death and destruction whenever an earthquake, landslide, mudslide, avalanche or flood occurs. Since 2000, there have been nine major earthquakes. Recent disasters estimate that at least 6,000 families (over 40,000 individuals) across 21 provinces have been affected by avalanches, flooding, landslides, and heavy snowfall since February 2014.

Economic Decline

Economic faces daunting economic challenges as gross domestic product has fallen substantially since the 1980s due to disruption of trade and transport and loss of labour and capital. The country’s economic growth remains impeded by the conflict, insecurity and unstable political situation. Inflation has also suppressed business freedom and investment freedom with Afghanistan is ranked 33rd among 40 countries in the Asia–Pacific region.¹ After years of slow recovery, the economy was dealt a significant blow by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has had a far-reaching impact on the country’s strong economy and food security. The COVID-19 pandemic has set back Afghanistan’s economic growth by several years. It exposed structural and resource gaps in responding to unforeseen events such as pandemics. Following the political transition in August 2021, international development assistance, longer-term development projects and institutional support have been suspended. The freeze of foreign assets is driving a liquidity crisis, resulting in the devaluation of the Afghani currency, compromising the economy’s shock absorbers. While measures may be implemented to prevent a total collapse of the economy, this may not go far beyond maintaining the basic functioning of the financial sector. Even in these mitigation measures in place, the economy is expected to further contract in the projection period, leading to further increases in acute food insecurity.

Acute Food Insecurity

Comparing IPC analyses for the last five years indicates a deepening and widening food crisis, with the number of Afghans classified in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse increasing. This September 2021 analysis, with nearly half of Afghanistan’s population experiencing high levels of food insecurity, and the highest number of food insecure people ever recorded since the first IPC analysis in 2011, makes it the world’s second largest food crisis in absolute terms. The complexity of the crisis in Afghanistan has reached a peak in the period covered by this analysis. The combined impact of multiple hazards pushed the crisis to unprecedented levels, with people’s ability to access food constrained like never observed before.

AFGHANISTAN: Integrated Food Security Phase Classification Snapshot | Crisis Background

2019 CURRENT Acute Food Insecurity
August - October 2019

Over 10.2 million people (33% of the population analysed) in Afghanistan were classified in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) between August and October 2019 (NSIA Pop. Ests.)

2019 PROJECTED Acute Food Insecurity
November 2019 - March 2020

Over 11.3 million people (37% of the population analysed) in Afghanistan were projected to be in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) between November 2019 and March 2020 (NSIA Pop. Ests.)

2020 CURRENT Acute Food Insecurity
April - May 2020

Over 10.9 million people (35% of the population analysed) in Afghanistan were classified in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) between April and May 2020 (NSIA Pop. Ests.)

2020 PROJECTED Acute Food Insecurity
August - October 2020

Over 11.1 million people (36% of the population analysed) in Afghanistan were classified in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) between August and October 2020 (NSIA Pop. Ests.)

2020 PROJECTED Acute Food Insecurity
November 2020 - March 2021

Over 13.1 million people (42% of the population analysed) in Afghanistan were projected to be in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) between November 2020 and March 2021 (NSIA Pop. Ests.)

2021 CURRENT Acute Food Insecurity
March - May 2021

Over 10.9 million people (35% of the population analysed) in Afghanistan were classified in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) between March and May 2021 (NSIA Pop. Ests.)

2021 CURRENT Acute Food Insecurity
September - October 2021

Over 18.8 million people (47% of the population analysed) in Afghanistan were classified in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) between September and October 2021 (Flowminder Pop. Ests.)

2022 PROJECTED Acute Food Insecurity
November 2021 - March 2022

Over 22.8 million people (55% of the population analysed) in Afghanistan were projected to be in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) between November 2021 and March 2022 (Flowminder Pop. Ests.)

¹ Afghanistan Economic Freedom 2021 Index https://www.heritage.org/index/country/afghanistan