More than 800,000 people in El Salvador (13% of the analysed population) experienced high levels of acute food insecurity, classified in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) from July to August 2021, due to the combined impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, high food prices, and low household income. From July to August 2021, the departments classified in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) were Ahuachapán and Morazán, while the rest of El Salvador was classified in Stressed (IPC Phase 2).

Although the health crisis exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic continued to derail the financial security of the most vulnerable households, it is estimated that the high coverage of state humanitarian assistance and international cooperation has contributed positively and prevented more people from becoming food insecure. The number of people experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity will likely decrease to around 600,000 (10% of the analysed population) from September 2021 to February 2022 and increase to around 900,000 (14% of the analysed population) between March and May 2022. The worsening situation in the second projection coincides with the onset of the seasonal hunger period characterised by high food prices, low labour opportunities and the likely continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

From September 2021 to February 2022, the departments of Morazán and Cabañas will likely continue to be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3), despite the expected increase in economic activity in different areas, mainly in the sale of agricultural labour, a rise in both salaries and the minimum wage in formal sector jobs, the upward trend in the flow of international remittances and the harvest of basic grains such as maize.

Indeed, the high probability of the La Niña phenomenon (65% probability) may negatively affect the harvest, thus compromising the availability of food reserves, the primary food source for subsistence farming families. However, the increase in remittances and the harvest of basic grains such as maize and beans are expected to improve household incomes and guarantee food reserves.

**Key Drivers**

- **COVID-19**: The COVID-19 pandemic is still present in the national territory, and with the emergence of four new variants, the socio-economic effects of the pandemic still represent a latent risk to food security in both the current and projected periods.
- **Loss of income**: Long periods of confinement have led to the loss or change of income opportunities in many households, contributing to the reduction of their income, negatively affecting their food security.
- **Increased food prices**: The progressive increase in the cost of fuel has had a ripple effect on the price of food items. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) has increased since the beginning of 2021, with a variation of 2.95% in June this year compared to the last.