IPC

Integrated Food Security
Phase Classification

MULTI PARTNER REAL TIME QUALITY REVIEW (RTQR):

IPC ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY ANALYSIS
GAZA STRIP
MAY - JUNE 2026

August 2026

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The IPC Acute Food Insecurity (AFI) analysis for the Gaza Strip is a multi-partner Globally Led Analysis (GLA) coordinated by the IPC Global Support Unit (GSU). The analysis conducted in May 2026 assessed the severity and magnitude of acute food insecurity across the Gaza Strip's five governorates converging all available evidence. During report drafting, new nutrition evidence became available. The Analysis Team (AT) was reconvened to review the new information and update the IPC analysis, incorporating all relevant data available up to 15 June 2026. This included outcome indicators for food consumption, livelihood change and acute malnutrition as well as contributing factors, such as humanitarian food security assistance (HFSA).

Compared with the food consumption outcome data available for the previous IPC AFI analysis published in December 2025, the data used in the May - June 2026 analysis showed improvements, with the proportion of the population experiencing moderate to severe food consumption gaps declining by approximately 15–35 percentage points. Nevertheless, 30–60 percent of the population continued to experience moderate or large food consumption gaps.

Acute malnutrition declined significantly, with less than two percent of children acutely malnourished, while HFSA reached 70 percent of the population in May 2026 with rations covering at least half of daily caloric requirements. In contrast, the livelihood coping strategies indicator remained consistently severe throughout 2025 and into 2026, reflecting both the cumulative collapse of household livelihoods and the sustained use of crisis- and emergency-level coping strategies.

Following the incorporation of new key evidence, and given the complexity of the analysis, the IPC global partnership, in consultation with the AT, initiated an external Real-Time Quality Review (RTQR). This decision also reflected the fact that the AT produced a range of population estimates by IPC phase, owing to divergent evidence on nutrition, food consumption, and livelihood changes. The purpose of the RTQR was to further assess the plausibility of the population estimates by IPC phase developed by the AT and to ensure the overall quality, technical rigour, and neutrality of the analysis.

The RTQR concluded that the AT's proposed range of estimates of population in IPC Phase 3 or above was plausible and consistent with the available evidence. The resulting conclusion on population estimates by IPC phase are outlined below.

Figure 1: RTQR conclusion on estimates by IPC phase

District	Total population analysed	Current (16 April - 30 June 2026)						Projection (1 July - 31 December 2026)					
		Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5	Phase 3+	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5	Phase 3+
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
North Gaza	92,813	0	35	55	10	0	65	0	30	60	10	0	70
Gaza	688,334	0	40	50	10	0	60	0	35	55	10	0	65
Deir al-Balah	718,248	0	45	45	10	0	55	0	35	55	10	0	65
Khan Younis	607,500	0	40	50	10	0	60	0	30	60	10	0	70
Rafah	11,320	0	40	50	10	0	60	0	30	60	10	0	70
Total	**2,118,215**	**0**	**41**	**49**	**10**	**0**	**59**	**0**	**33**	**57**	**10**	**0**	**67**

Given the very high reliance of households on humanitarian assistance, the RTQR also recommended assessing the Population in Need of Humanitarian Food Security Assistance (PiNHA), and presenting the results alongside the standard population estimates by IPC phase. This exercise aims to better capture the extent to which humanitarian food assistance is sustaining food consumption outcomes and helps inform decision-making.

The RTQR further recommended clearly communicating the population's continued dependence on HFSA, the highly volatile operating environment, and the uncertainty associated with the long projection period. Given the rapidly evolving context, key assumptions should be closely monitored, and should humanitarian access or assistance deteriorate significantly, the analysis should be updated.

BACKGROUND

A joint IPC Acute Food Insecurity (AFI) and Acute Malnutrition (AMN) analysis on the Gaza Strip was conducted virtually from 18 to 25 May 2026, with the participation of 61 analysts from 20 organisations representing multiple sectors. During report drafting, new nutrition evidence became available, through a Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions (SMART) survey. The AT reconvened to review the new information and update the analysis, incorporating all relevant data available up to 15 June 2026.

Following the incorporation of new key evidence, and given the complexity of the analysis, an external RTQR was initiated, in consultation with the AT. This decision also reflected the fact that the AT produced a range of population estimates by IPC phase rather than a single estimate, owing to divergent evidence on nutrition, food consumption, and livelihood changes. The purpose of the RTQR was to further assess the plausibility of the population estimates by IPC phase developed by the AT, and ensure the overall quality, technical rigour and neutrality of the analysis for all five governorates covering both the current (16 April – 30 June 2026) and projection (1 July - 31 December 2026) analysis periods.

The RTQR was conducted between 7 and 9 July 2026 by six senior food security experts and one nutrition expert from the IPC global partnership who had not participated in the analysis, ensuring the independence of the quality review. The review was coordinated by four facilitators from the IPC Global Support Unit (GSU) also not involved in the analysis.

RELIABILITY AND EVIDENCE LEVELS ASSIGNED BY THE ANALYSIS TEAM

The RTQR agreed with the reliability scores and evidence levels assigned by the AT, in line with the IPC protocols.

Table 1: Reliability scores for data sources

Source	AT Reliability Scoring	RTQR Reliability Scoring
Source #1 (all governorates)	R2	R2
Source #2 (Gaza governorate only)	R1+	R1+
Evidence levels	High (***) for all governorates	

HUMANITARIAN FOOD SECURITY ASSISTANCE

Humanitarian Food Security Assistance (HFSA) is a lifeline in the Gaza Strip, and significant levels have been delivered prior to and during the analysis period. While the delivery of food parcels declined from a peak of 2.13 million beneficiaries in November 2025 to 1.49 million in May 2026, HFSA still covers a significant proportion—about 70 percent—of the Gaza Strip population (see Figure 2).

According to Source #1 data, around 60 percent of households self-reported receiving significant amounts of food parcels. Beneficiary households were provided with rations equivalent to about 50-75 percent of daily kilocalorie needs and reported that food assistance lasted 15 days on average (Source #1). Data from implementing partners indicated similar levels of coverage across the Gaza Strip. However, because assistance was insufficient to reach all those in need, implementing partners frequently rotated assistance among households from month to month (see Figure 3). Concerns have been raised about the effective utilisation of food parcels as limited access to cooking fuel constrains the ability of the most vulnerable households to prepare the food they received. Additionally, the rations' dietary diversity is poor, as critical food groups, like fresh produce, animal-source foods, and other nutrient-rich items are not included in the standard food parcel.

Figure 2: Food parcels beneficiary trends

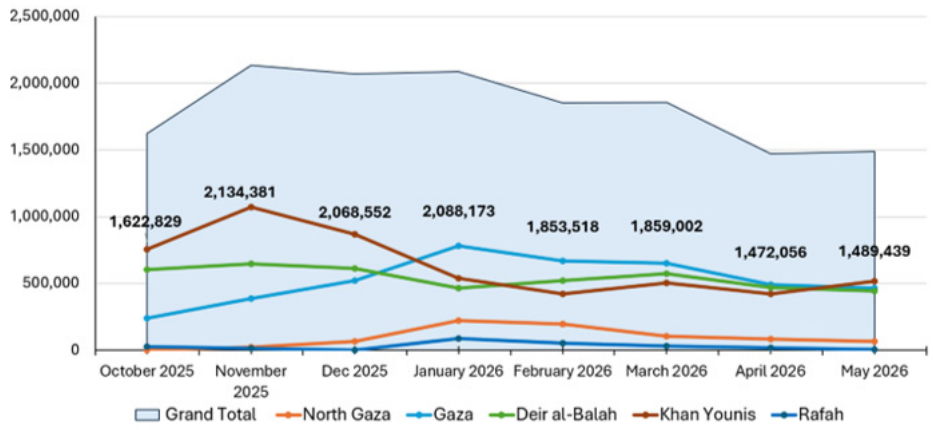
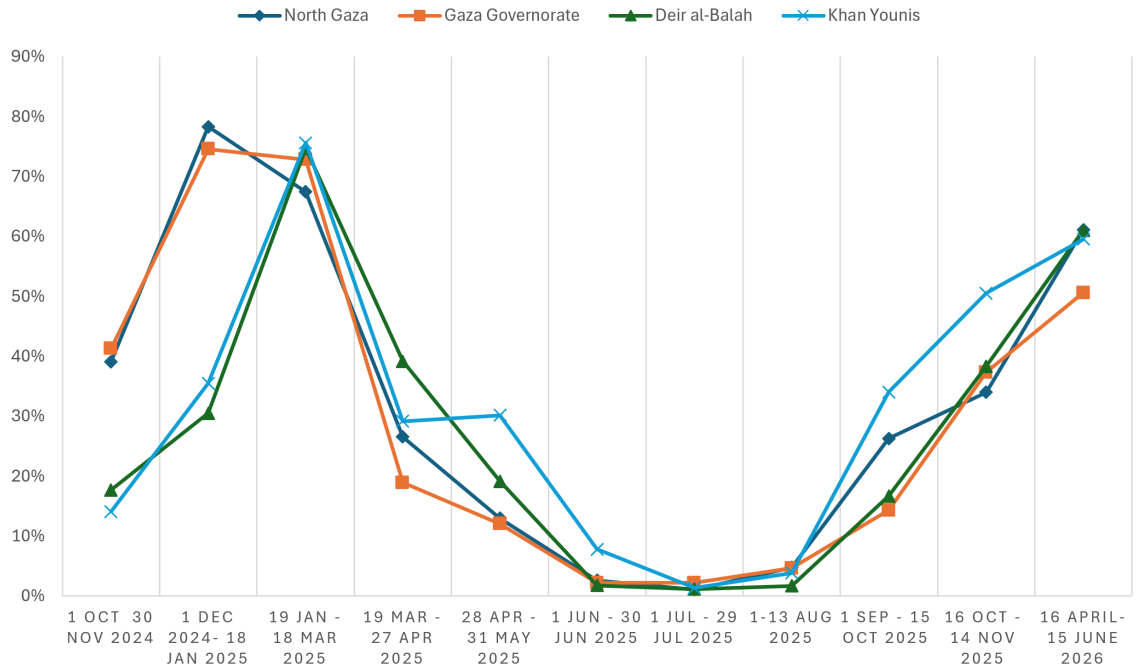
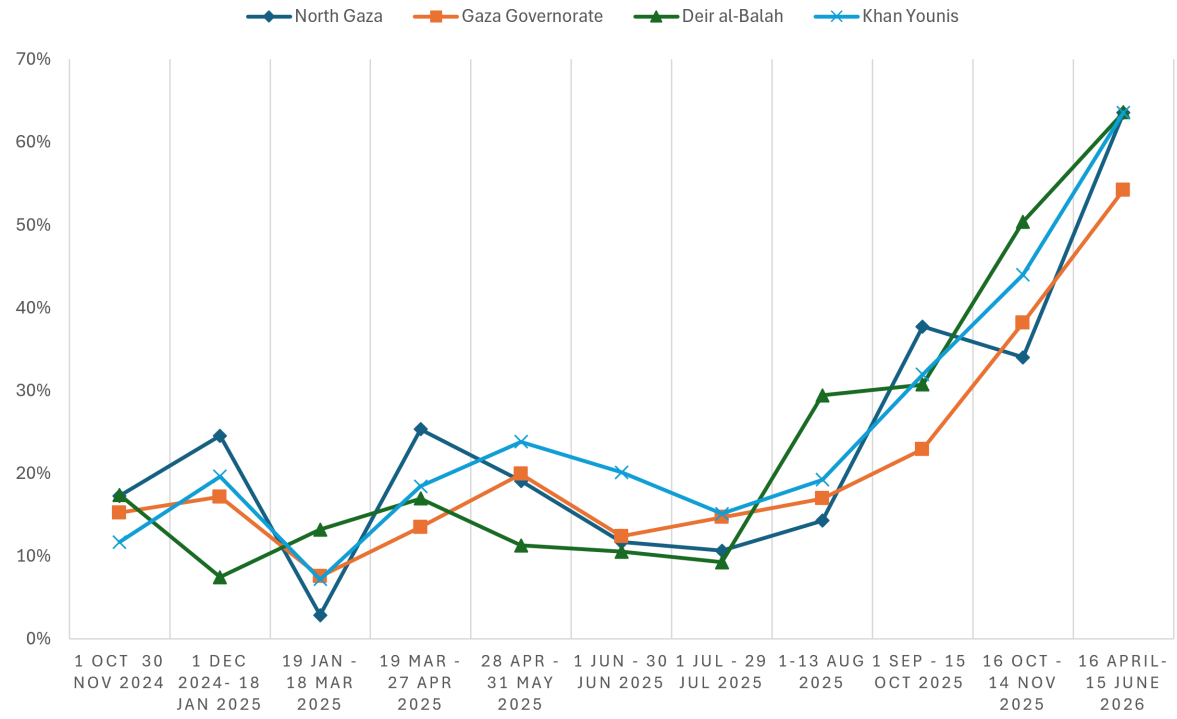


Figure 3: Trends of percentage of households reporting receiving food parcels, by governorate, Source #1



Alongside food parcel distributions, cooked meal programmes expanded markedly in the first half of 2026, reaching approximately 54–64 percent of households across all governorates by April–June 2026 (see Figure 4). In addition, multi-purpose cash assistance (MPCA) increased in late 2025 and has continued in 2026, reaching an estimated 34–38 percent of the population between January and May 2026. Although the assistance was originally intended to cover 100 percent of minimum survival needs, rising prices eroded its value. By May 2026, the transfer covered only about 75 percent of the current market cost of the survival basket, reducing households' purchasing power and constraining their ability to afford essential goods.

Figure 4: Trends of percentage of households reporting receiving cooked meals, by governorate, Source #1



Considering the scale of the assistance provided, despite its limitations and caveats, it is clear that at least 60-70 percent of the population received significant humanitarian assistance during the current analysis period (16 April – 30 June 2026). This assistance is estimated to have covered approximately 50-75 percent of beneficiaries' caloric needs. Accordingly, the observed reduction in the severity of food consumption gaps is consistent with the documented coverage and frequency of humanitarian food assistance.

COMMERCIAL IMPORTS

Improved access and reduced conflict intensity following the October 2025 ceasefire also enabled an increase of commercial imports, with nearly 100 truckloads per day in recent months. While this represents a significant improvement, import volumes remain below those recorded prior to the crisis.

The food prices also declined significantly from September 2025 to May 2026, reflecting improved availability and accessibility of many food commodities. However, prices remained above pre-crisis levels (September 2023) leaving food items unaffordable for many households due to lack of income and high levels of debt.

FOOD CONSUMPTION AND LIVELIHOOD CHANGE OUTCOMES

Food consumption outcome indicators from Source #1 [Food Consumption Score (FCS), Household Hunger Score (HHS) and Reduced Coping Strategies Index (rCSI)] consistently converged around IPC Phase 3 or above, indicating lower levels of food consumption deficits than those observed in the IPC analysis published in December 2025, with the proportion of the population experiencing moderate or severe food consumption gaps declining by approximately 15–35 percentage points. Across the five governorates, FCS Phase 3 or above ranged from 31–37 percent, HHS from 30–41 percent, and rCSI from 54–61 percent (see Table 2). Taken together, these indicators suggest that a substantial share of the population continues to experience food consumption gaps or is only marginally able to meet minimum food needs by resorting to coping strategies. The convergence of evidence on food consumption provides a coherent picture of continued, though reduced, acute food insecurity across the Gaza Strip.

Table 2: Prevalence of households in IPC Phase 3 or above according to outcome indicators, based on IPC thresholds

Governorate	FCS Ph3+	HHS Ph3+	rCSI Ph3+	LCS Ph3+
North Gaza	36%	36%	61%	98%
Gaza	35%	35%	54%	97%
Deir al-Balah	36%	30%	55%	94%
Khan Younis	37%	41%	55%	93%
Rafah	31%	38%	58%	93%

In contrast, data on Livelihood Coping Strategies (LCS) showed substantially higher Phase 3 or above estimates, ranging from 93 to 98 percent across governorates. Unlike food consumption indicators, LCS did not show a comparable trend of improvement over time. While FCS, HHS and rCSI were highly responsive to fluctuations in humanitarian assistance—deteriorating during periods of reduced assistance and improving when assistance increased—LCS remained relatively stable throughout 2025 and early 2026, resulting in a growing divergence between food consumption and livelihood-based measures. Interpretation of LCS trends requires caution, as the livelihood coping strategy module was revised several times during the crisis, limiting comparability over time.

The divergence between food consumption and livelihood indicators suggests that the LCS indicator captures both the cumulative erosion of household assets and income-generating capacity resulting from the protracted crisis, as well as short-term strategies to cope with food deficits. This is in line with other data from Source #2 on income sources, which indicates that 83 percent of households reported having no income in Gaza Governorate. While reliable data were lacking for the other governorates, there is no indication that conditions differ substantially across governorates. Many households are without means to earn an income, or access food other than relying on social networks, humanitarian assistance, or the minimal production available.

Overall, the RTQR gave greater analytical importance to the convergence and trends observed across food consumption indicators and contributing factors, while LCS data was used to assess whether households with food gaps are trying to address these through crisis or emergency coping strategies. The evidence on food consumption outcomes indicates that acute food insecurity remains widespread and serious but has decreased compared with late 2025; whereas livelihood coping data shows that systems and household resilience remain severely depleted. The RTQR conclusion therefore reflects the convergence of the evidence showing improved food consumption outcomes due to the highly significant HFSA and the continued effects of prolonged livelihood depletion.

FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW

The RTQR team recognises the high commitment and technical arguments presented by the AT. After careful review and consideration of the evidence, **the RTQR team concluded the following population estimates by IPC phase to be plausible**: 60 percent of the population in Gaza, Khan Younis, and Rafah governorates, 55 percent in Deir al-Balah, and 65 percent in North Gaza in IPC Phase 3 or above, including 10 percent in IPC Phase 4 in all governorates.

Gaza, Deir al-Balah, Khan Younis and Rafah

Food consumption outcome indicators from Source #1 (FCS, HHS and rCSI) converge around IPC Phase 3, showing improvements compared to the previous IPC analysis (December 2025). Across the four governorates, the indicative Phase 3 or above prevalence for all food consumption indicators (FCS, HHS and rCSI) ranged between 30 and 58 percent. These indicators consistently point to notably lower severity than the December 2025 analysis while remaining within IPC Phase 3 or above.

LCS, however, consistently produced substantially higher estimates than the food consumption indicators, with Phase 3 or above prevalence ranging from 93 percent to 98 percent. Unlike the food consumption indicators, LCS did not exhibit a similar trend of improvement over time. While FCS, HHS and rCSI deteriorated during periods of reduced HFSA and subsequently improved as assistance increased, LCS remained relatively stable throughout early 2025 and 2026, or even showed a slight improvement during periods when food consumption indicators reflected worse outcomes. This suggests that, at the aggregate level, LCS captures both the cumulative collapse of household livelihoods resulting from the protracted crisis and short-term changes in strategies used to address food consumption gaps.

The improvements in food consumption are consistent with the documented scale of HFSA delivered during the analysis period. Humanitarian food security assistance reached a substantial proportion of households across all governorates, with approximately 70 percent of the population receiving food assistance during April–May 2026, although coverage varied by governorate. In addition to food parcel distributions—meeting between 50-75 percent of daily kilocalorie requirements—cooked meal programmes expanded substantially during the first half of 2026, reaching approximately 45–58 percent of households across the governorates by April–June 2026. In parallel, multi-purpose cash assistance (MPCA) reached around one-third of the population between January and May 2026. The RTQR therefore considers that the observed improvements in food consumption are consistent with the documented scale and frequency of HFSA delivered during this period.

Based on the convergence of evidence, the RTQR concludes that 10 percent of population in IPC Phase 4 is plausible for Gaza, Deir al-Balah, Khan Younis and Rafah governorates. While approximately 5 percent of the population had severe HHS and poor FCS, indicative of Phase 4, other evidence indicated that a somewhat larger proportion likely faced larger food consumption gaps. Across the four governorates, 16–21 percent of households reported consuming only one meal per day, while 9–17 percent reported not receiving any humanitarian assistance. In addition, a notable share of households reported resorting to some of the most severe coping strategies, including emergency level strategies: 11–13 percent resorting to begging, 22–31 percent engaging in high-risk, exploitative or life-threatening activities. This suggests that a proportion of households experiencing very severe food consumption deficits may not have been fully captured by the outcome indicators with Phase 4 cut-offs (i.e. FCS and HHS).

North Gaza

Regarding North Gaza Governorate, the RTQR considers 65 percent of the population in IPC Phase 3 or above, including 10 percent in Phase 4, to be plausible, reflecting both the greater severity of the contributing factors and the convergence of food consumption outcome indicators. The AT identified North Gaza as experiencing a higher severity of acute food insecurity relative to the other governorates. Consistent with this assessment, the RTQR found that conditions in North Gaza were slightly more severe than the rest of the Gaza Strip.

Evidence on key contributing factors further supports this finding. Compared with other governorates, North Gaza faces even more extensive destruction, extremely limited income-generating opportunities, prolonged displacement, and a very high dependence on humanitarian assistance, with 74 percent of households reporting HFSA as their main source of food (compared to 60 to 72 percent in other governorates). At the same time, HFSA delivery levels in North Gaza were broadly comparable to the other governorates.

In North Gaza, among the food consumption outcome indicators, rCSI showed the highest severity, with 61 percent of households in indicative IPC Phase 3 or above, compared to 54–58 percent in the other governorates. Although the other indicators' values were broadly comparable to the other governorates, the higher rCSI suggests higher levels of coping to meet food gaps. Values for livelihood coping strategies were slightly higher in North Gaza, but largely comparable with other governorates, with 10 percent of households scavenging and 13 percent resorting to begging.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Estimate the Population in Need of Humanitarian Food Security Assistance (PiNHA).

The RTQR recommends that a PiNHA analysis be conducted in accordance with the IPC PiNHA Guidance to estimate the likely severity of acute food insecurity in the absence of HFSA. The PiNHA results should be presented alongside the standard estimates by IPC phase to clearly communicate that the relatively lower IPC Phase 3 or above estimates compared to the standard IPC analysis primarily reflect the substantial mitigating effect of HFSA. This exercise aims to better capture the extent to which HFSA is sustaining food consumption outcomes and will help decision-makers understand that the IPC AFI findings should not be interpreted as indicating reduced need for HFSA. With livelihoods largely collapsed, any significant reduction in assistance could rapidly result in an increase of population in IPC Phase 4 and 5, as previously observed.

The RTQR recommends a systematic review of the LCS module in Gaza.

While the RTQR acknowledges that effort has gone into adapting the LCS strategies and response options to the Gaza Strip context, further work should be done to ensure that it is globally comparable, and meeting the objectives of the LCS, which is to assess the medium and longer-term household coping and productive capacities and their future impact on food needs.

The RTQR recommends that the AT highlight the linkages between acute food insecurity (AFI) and acute malnutrition (AMN).

The factors contributing to the observed divergence between the classifications must be clearly explained in the full IPC AFI-AMN Gaza Strip report.

The RTQR raises concerns on the volatility and uncertainty of the situation given the long projection period and recommends that monitoring systems are strengthened during that period.

Food security outcomes remain extremely sensitive to changes in conflict dynamics and humanitarian access. Any deterioration in access or escalation of hostilities could quickly reverse recent improvements in food consumption and lead to rapid deterioration into IPC Phase 4 and 5. Given the rapidly evolving context, the RTQR recommends close monitoring of key assumptions and regular updates to the analysis as new evidence becomes available.

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