



Research report for SC **Addressing the Hunger Crisis in Afghanistan**

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18th March 2022



Introduction

Currently, 1 in 3 people are hungry and 2 million children are malnourished. With drought, pandemic, and conflict, the food security situation will continue to worsen. The latest IPC assessment (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification) - a global standard for assessing food insecurity - found 22.8 million people could face acute risk, while 8.7 million face emergency levels of hunger. Since the fall of Kabul and Afghan government to Taliban takes over the country has suffered immensely, creating high unemployment, a lack of cash flow and rising prices has led to a new class of hungry where even urban residents are suffering from food insecurities alongside rural communities as few can afford sufficient food according to recent WFP (World Food Programme) surveys. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) warns that Afghanistan will experience universal poverty, with 97 percent of Afghans living below the World Bank poverty line of \$1.90 per day. In addition to this, according to the IPC report, food insecurity in Afghanistan is attributed to the lingering impact of COVID-19, armed conflict, a jump in food prices, high unemployment rates and income loss, and the start of the complex and recurrent La Niña weather event.

Key terms

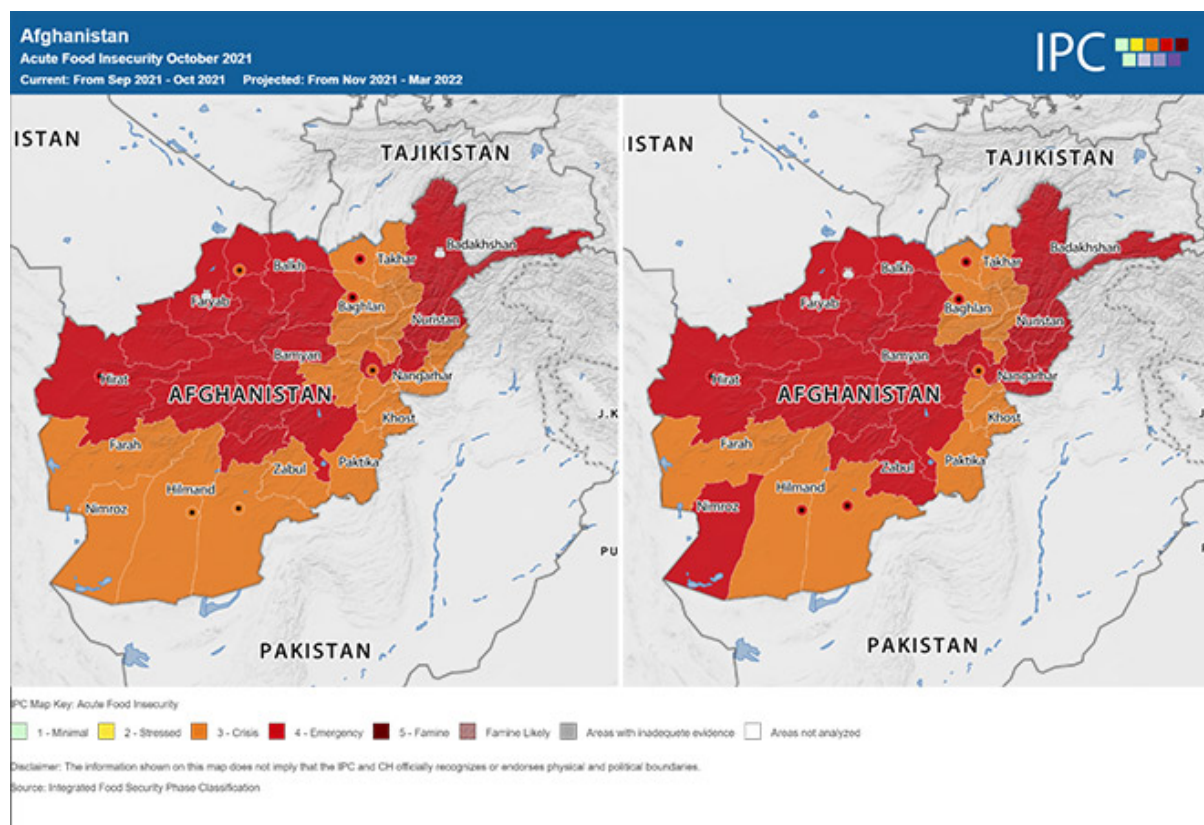
Hunger crisis: A food crisis occurs when rates of hunger and malnutrition rise sharply at local, national, or global levels.


Taliban: also referred to as the Taliban Islamic Movement or Islamic Movement of Taliban, is a Deobandi-Pashtun Islamic fundamentalist, militant Islamist, and jihadist political movement in Afghanistan that is designated by some countries as a terrorist organization

La Niña: it is part of a cycle known as the El Nino-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) - a naturally occurring shift in ocean temperatures and weather patterns along the equator in the Pacific Ocean, bringing wetter conditions and more cyclones

General Overview

Death from hunger and destitution is increasing, and could potentially surpass the number that have died during conflict over the last decade. The United Nations has launched its largest single country funding appeal, requesting over \$5 billion in disaster response and refugee assistance programming.





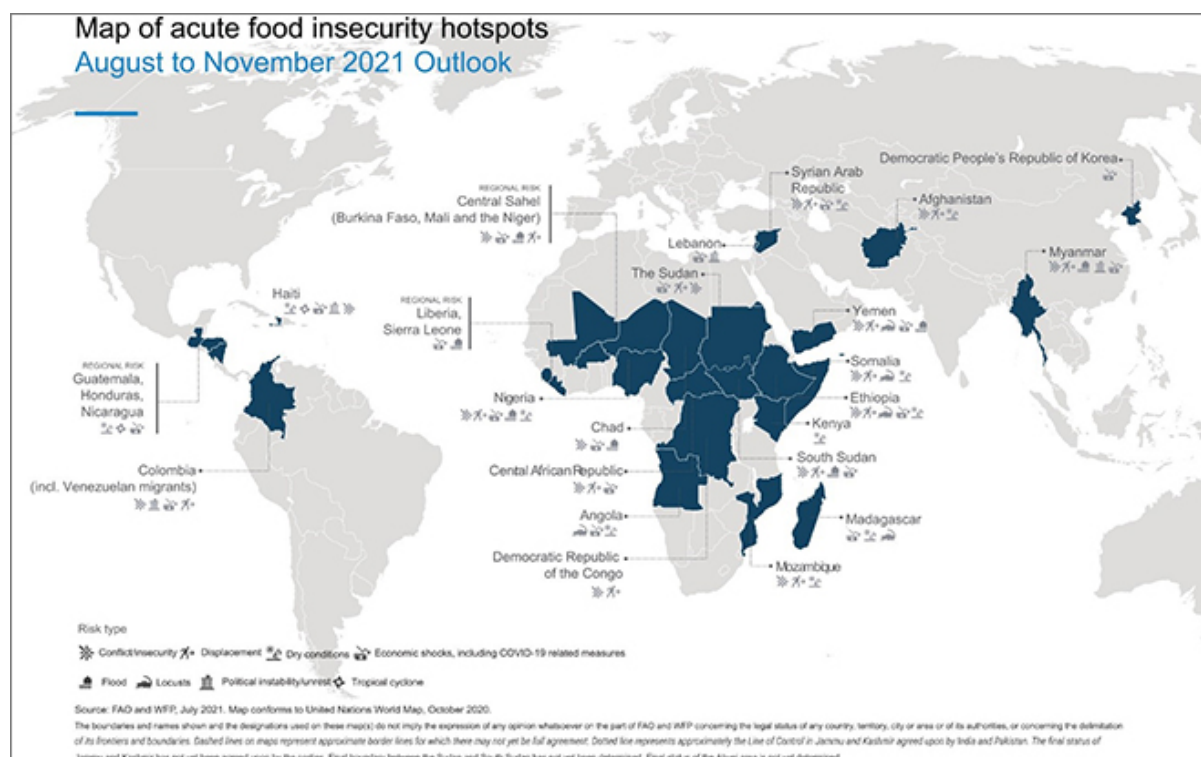
The international community has also failed to take the steps necessary to engage with the Taliban to address both the humanitarian and systemic drivers of hunger among Afghans. The harsh winter in Afghanistan has highlighted the inadequacy of the Taliban government's approach as in 2021 Rein Paulsen, Director of the Office of Emergencies and Resilience for the Food and Agriculture Organisation, predicted a "25 percent deficit on the national wheat crop," which is a main source of calories for Afghans.

Unfortunately, even before the Taliban takeover of Kabul, food insecurity ran high in Afghanistan for 12 million people, 2 million of which were children experiencing severe hunger and half the population living in poverty. The United Nations estimates that this number has nearly doubled to 23 million people, (55 %) of the total Afghan population. The underlying drivers of the crisis today are conflict, climate change, and COVID-19.

The major factor of Afghanistan's current humanitarian crisis is the liquidity crisis, caused in part by the international community's decision to freeze \$10 billion in Afghan assets. It is also worsened by drought conditions across the country as climate change is wreaking havoc on the country's food supply. more frequent droughts, including last year in the north and west of Afghanistan, led to food insecurity and mass displacement even before the U.S. withdrawal and the country's economic collapse. This has led to soaring food prices, with the cost of bread rising 80% since the summer. Taliban mismanagement of limited resources and lack of technocratic experience, their inexperience in government, and its lack of trained officials, add poor governance and political illegitimacy has exacerbated existing challenges.

The scale of need is already enormous, both UN officials stressed, warning that if insufficient action is taken now to support the Afghanistan and regional response plans, "next year we'll be asking for \$10 billion". Officials say "This is a stop-gap, an absolutely essential stop-gap measure that we are putting in front of the international community today. Without this being funded, there won't be a future, we need this to be done, otherwise there will be outflow, there will be suffering." Rejecting questions that the

funding would be used to support the Taliban's grip on de facto government, UN officials insisted that it would go directly into the pockets of "nurses and health officials in the field" so that these services can continue, not as support for State structures. UN aid agencies describe Afghanistan's plight as one of the world's most rapidly growing humanitarian crises. According to the UN humanitarian coordination office OCHA, half the population now faces acute hunger, over 9 million people have been displaced and millions of children are out of school.




Major parties involved

The representative of the **United States** said that the United Nations presence in Afghanistan is more critical than ever, pointing to a range of factors leading to a humanitarian crisis of daunting proportions in the country, including endemic aid dependency exacerbated by the pandemic, drought and decades of prolonged conflict culminating in the seizure of power by military means instead of a negotiated settlement. “The Afghan people should not have to pay twice for the Taliban’s decisions,” he said. The United States is the largest contributor of aid to the country, and has committed to providing \$474 million in 2021 alone.

Kenya’s delegate, who also spoke for **Niger, Tunisia** and **Saint Vincent** and the Grenadines, was among many raising concerns about recent rampant terrorist attacks, which reprehensibly target civilians and civilian infrastructure. He called for immediate steps to revitalize the global counter-terrorism architecture, and stated that the Security Council should ensure that any interventions are informed by security interests of the Afghan people rather than by geostrategic interests.

For his part, **China’s** delegate said Afghanistan must be able to pursue a sound path towards development, calling on the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to consider the resumption of financial support. In light of the dire situation facing the country, the impact of unilateral sanctions and the freezing of overseas assets cannot be ignored. “When teachers and doctors have not received salaries for half a year, where does one begin to speak of girls’ education, or fighting the pandemic?”, he asked, adding that such measures are morally unacceptable and worsen the humanitarian crisis.

Pakistan’s representative likewise called for the lifting of the unjustified freeze on Afghanistan’s assets, noting that his country has committed \$30 million in assistance to the country, together with wheat, rice, emergency medical supplies and other essential



items. Highlighting that his country has initiated the platform of the six neighbouring countries plus the Russian Federation to promote a regional consensus on steps towards Afghanistan's normalisation, he also credited the Extended Troika grouping of China, Pakistan, Russian Federation and the United States, as a key format to that end.

Possible solutions

1. Outside governments must harness the renewed attention of multilateral organisations and donor governments to address both the immediacy of the current crisis and push for long-term systemic changes to address hunger and instability.
2. Provide hygiene and water storage kits for a displaced family, a food pack for a displaced family for a month and an emergency shelter
3. Anticipate the harshness of the winter season and what it has to bring, including a threat to their very survival, we are on the ground, distributing heaters and fuel, blankets, clothes, and shelter materials to thousands of families
4. The continuing deterioration of the economy threatens to heighten the risk of extremism, adding that the paralysis of the banking sector could push more of the financial system into unregulated informal money exchanges which can facilitate terrorism, trafficking and drug smuggling
5. United Nations to work with all parties on the creation of a political structure to enable coexistence and end the cycle of war that Afghanistan has been trapped in.



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