

FACT SHEET

CENTRAL SAHEL HUNGER CRISIS

DECEMBER 2022



NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

**+1.8
MILLION**
people in need
of humanitarian
assistance



17.9 MILLION PEOPLE will need humanitarian assistance across the Central Sahel in 2023, compared to 16.1 million in Nov. 2022 (GHO 2023).

600,000 CHILDREN are severely malnourished (OCHA, Sept. 2022).

5.3 MILLION PEOPLE

are food insecure (from phase 3 to 5) (Nov. 2022 Harmonized Framework).

7.6 MILLION PEOPLE

are projected to be food insecure in June-Aug. 2023 (Nov. 2022 Harmonized Framework).

25,500 PEOPLE

will experience catastrophic hunger (phase 5) in June-August 2023 in conflict-affected areas of the Central Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin.



+500,000
people
internally
displaced in
1 year



2.5 MILLION PEOPLE

are displaced by the conflict (OCHA, Sept. 2022), compared to 2 million in Sept. 2021.

327,000 PEOPLE

were affected by floods in Niger, and 79,000 in Mali in 2022 (OCHA, Dec. 2022).

BACKGROUND

The Central Sahel has been plagued by a humanitarian crisis for close to a decade with needs that have drastically increased in the last three years in correlation with protracted conflict, massive population displacement, climate change, and socio-political instability. In addition to this, the Ukraine crisis has led to high general price inflation and high food prices, while the residual effects of the restriction's measures against the COVID19 are still being felt.

Most of the underlying drivers of the current humanitarian crisis are likely

to aggravate further in 2023, and will worsen the hunger crisis in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger.

Yet the humanitarian response in the Central Sahel remains largely insufficient, with lack of funding, problems of access, and weak coordination. Early recovery and resilience responses are the least funded, failing to stem the accelerating deterioration of the hunger crisis and turning back the clock on overall human development and human rights gains made over the past decade, including in girls' rights and gender equality.



KEY DRIVERS OF THE HUNGER CRISIS

CIVIL INSECURITY AND INCREASING DISPLACEMENT

- Massive population displacements affect entire regions, and the host communities have to share their already scarce resources.
- Non-state armed groups loot and destroy crops, steal livestock, and extort money from communities.
- Markets in affected areas are no longer functional or operate at a slower pace, and the Sahelian pastoral strip is largely inaccessible due to insecurity.



The interaction of climate change with social, economic and political factors could exacerbate conflicts over access to limited or unevenly distributed resources.

ADDITIONAL DISRUPTIVE FACTORS

- Food prices have risen due to low domestic production, price increases on international markets, fuel price increases, etc. This is worsened by a decline in agricultural production.
- Since the beginning of the Ukraine crisis, cereal shortages are reported. According to [FAO estimates](#), 30% of the wheat consumed in Africa comes from Ukraine and Russia. Mali is more than 50% dependent on wheat imports from Russia for its consumption.
- Up to 88% of fertilizer needs for the 2022 season in West Africa were not covered, which could significantly affect crop production and further increase food prices according to [an assessment](#).
- Economic sanctions by regional and international institutions against military regimes, and COVID19's management measures still have residual effects on prices and availability of food.

VULNERABILITY FACTORS

- The Central Sahel countries are among the most vulnerable to [climate change](#).
 - Significant rainfall deficits have led to a decrease in cereal production in 2021.
 - Major floods have affected the Central Sahel countries in recent years.
- Recurrent insect infestation, in particular legionary caterpillars and crickets, and granivorous birds' attacks destroy crops.



WORRYING PROJECTIONS

- Conflict is likely to deteriorate further, given political instability and the withdrawal of foreign counter insurgency operations from Mali and Burkina Faso.
- Significant drops in cereal production are expected in Niger, Burkina Faso, and central Mali.
- The nutritional status of children and women will further deteriorate with the decrease in attendance at health facilities and their [closure](#) due to insecurity.
- Long-term [projections](#) suggest temperatures increases in the range of 3°C to 6°C in the Central Sahel, which will contribute to worsen the hunger crisis and make it chronic.

Violence and attacks by armed groups are spilling over towards neighbouring coastal countries. The security situation in Benin, Ivory Coast, Ghana and Togo has significantly deteriorated in 2022. The insecurity in the region will be exacerbated by an already worsening conflict in Burkina Faso, if no measures are taken.



IMPACT OF HUNGER CRISIS

IMPACT ON CHILDREN

- Stunted growth
- Greater vulnerability to infections
- Death
- Inability to attend school/walk long distances to school
- Drop out of school so that children can work
- Children running away from home to look for work.

IMPACT ON GIRLS

- Increased exposure to all forms of gender-based violence including sexual exploitation, those who have been withdrawn from school or have never attended school being particularly at risk
- Girls more likely than boys at risk of being taken out of school to work
- Girls forced to marry for their families to have one less mouth to feed and/or get a dowry.

IMPACT ON THE GENERAL POPULATION

Increased vulnerability of communities to predation by armed groups. Some armed groups recruit from communities whose livelihoods are affected, including children and youth.

IMPACT ON WOMEN AND GIRLS

- Women and girls sacrificing their food rations for their families, eating less and last
- Girls and women forced to diversify their activities, exposing themselves to additional risks away from their usual environment
- Severe and long-term health consequences for pregnant and lactating women and their infants
- Increased exposure to physical and psychological abuse within the couple when the husband responds with violence to the wife's demands for money and food
- Girls and women subjected to dietary restrictions for cultural reasons are more likely to go without food when their usual foods are no longer available.

FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO reported that the prevalence of moderate to severe food insecurity was 10% higher among women than men throughout the world in 2020 and that the food insecurity gender gap widened from 2019 to 2020.



BURKINA FASO



« Armed men killed some of us and burnt our houses, that's why we ended up in Kaya. I can't eat enough and I can no longer take the animals to the pasture. We have no source of income because we have no activity. The water supply has also been a real problem for us. »

Justine, internally displaced girl in the Centre-North region

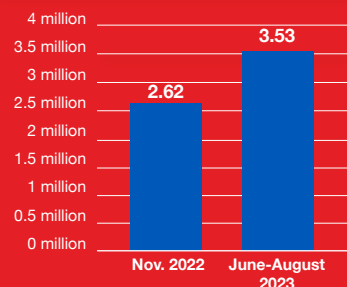


KEY POINTS

- Burkina Faso faces **THE WORST HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN ITS HISTORY**, with one in four Burkinabe in need of humanitarian assistance.
- Of the three countries in the Central Sahel, Burkina Faso is the most affected by displacement, with more than **1,761,915 INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDPs)** as of [Oct. 2022](#) out of an estimated population of 22 million, including more than 800,000 people newly displaced in the first 10 months of 2022. More than half of the IDPs are under 14.
- Non-state armed groups keep the entire Sahel region, in northern Burkina Faso, under blockade, **PREVENTING THE SUPPLY OF FOOD TO A 1.3 MILLION PEOPLE**, half of whom are already food insecure, according to the [food security cluster](#).
- An estimated **1.7 MILLION PEOPLE** in need live in areas where **LESS THAN HALF OF BASIC SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE** (GHO 2023).

- 2,618,638 PEOPLE ARE FOOD INSECURE (FROM PHASE 3 TO 5)**, including 1,817 in phase 5 (Nov. 2022 Harmonized Framework).
- 3,533,220 PEOPLE ARE PROJECTED TO BE FOOD INSECURE** in June-August 2023.

Food insecure people



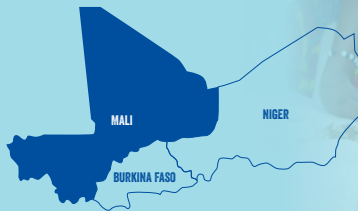
19,867 people are projected to be in disaster phase 5

- The [cash working group](#) indicated anticipated a **20% INCREASE IN THE HOUSEHOLD MINIMUM EXPENDITURE BASKET** due to the Ukraine impact on global markets and supply chains.

According to a study conducted by Plan International in May 2022 in Ouahigouya, Kongoussi, Fada N'Gourma and Kaya through 28 focus groups discussions:

- 100% OF THE HOUSEHOLDS BORROWED FOOD** from relatives and friends at least twice in the last 7 days.
- 78% LIMITED PORTIONS OF THEIR MEALS** every day in the last 7 days.
- ABOUT 39% DID NOT EAT ALL DAY AT LEAST ONCE** in the last 7 days.
- 26% DISPOSED OF PRODUCTIVE ASSETS**, including small ruminants to meet their basic needs.
- 34%** of the participants who fled from their homes mentioned that their **PRODUCTIVE ASSETS WERE LEFT OR LOOTED BY ARMED GROUPS**.

MALI



« With the conflict we were forced to come here. To suddenly leave your environment can be really difficult. I can't cook enough. We need rice, oil, sugar... And we have problems finding firewood. I received money via mobile transfer. I go to the market to buy condiments and sell them on the IDP site. I was able to create my own source of income. »

Fanta, 40, IDP in the Mopti region, mother of 3

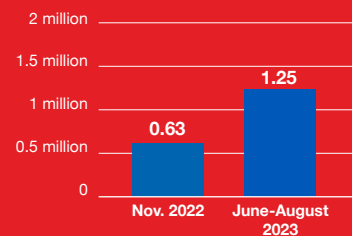


KEY POINTS

- Mali is facing the **WORST HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN OVER A DECADE**. In 2023, 9 million out of 16 million crisis-affected people will need immediate humanitarian assistance, compared to 7.5 million in 2022, a 20% increase.
- **Malnutrition levels** are alarming, with a **GLOBAL ACUTE MALNUTRITION PREVALENCE OF 10.8%** (exceeding 15% in the Gao region) and a severe acute malnutrition prevalence of 2.1% in 2022.
- The compounded effect of the 2022 economic sanctions and global inflation will continue to increase the prices of basic household items, such as millet and sorghum.
PRICE INCREASES OF OVER 100% in the last year will further exacerbate vulnerabilities (GHO 2023).
- **79,000 PEOPLE WERE AFFECTED BY FLOODS** in 2022, Mopti, Koulikoro and Segou being the most affected areas.

- **631,684 PEOPLE ARE FOOD INSECURE (FROM PHASE 3 TO 5)** (Nov. 2022 Harmonized Framework).
- **1,246,406 PEOPLE ARE PROJECTED TO BE FOOD INSECURE IN JUNE-AUGUST 2023** including 1,671 in phase 5.

Food insecure people



According to a study conducted by Plan International in August 2022 in Gao, Menaka, Mopti, Segou, and Timbuktu among 785 people:

- Around **80% OF THE HOUSEHOLDS CONSUMED LESS PREFERRED FOOD** at least 4 times in the last 7 days.
- At least **60% BORROWED MONEY** from family members and friends in order to buy food at least 3 times in the last 7 days.
- About **70% LIMITED PORTION OF THEIR MEALS** in at least 3 days in the last 7 days.
- At least **73% OF ADULTS REDUCED FOOD INTAKE** to allow children to eat.
- **39% DISPOSED OF PRODUCTIVE ASSETS INCLUDING** small ruminants to meet their basic needs.
- **25% DID NOT EAT ALL DAY AT LEAST 3 TIMES** in the last 7 days due to lack of money to buy food.

NIGER



« I have never seen anything like this before. Disasters have come, one after the other, over the past five years: floods, drought, famine, armed conflicts and even COVID19. We lack everything, especially food and drinking water. I am grateful for the cash Plan International has given me. I hope this assistance will continue because we need cash and food to survive. »

Hariata, 53, head of household from the host community in the Tillabéri region



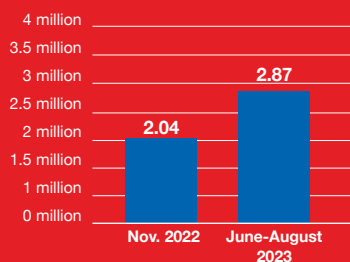
KEY POINTS

- The number of people in need of humanitarian assistance will increase from 3.7 million in Nov. 2022 to **4.2 MILLION IN 2023** (GHO 2023).

+500,000
people in need
of humanitarian
assistance

- 2,044,331 PEOPLE ARE FOOD INSECURE (FROM PHASE 3 TO 5)** (Nov. 2022 Harmonized Framework).
- 2,872,278 PEOPLE ARE PROJECTED TO BE FOOD INSECURE** in June-August 2023.

Food insecure people



- 278,378 UNDER-FIVE CHILDREN** (51% girls) suffering from **SEVERE ACUTE MALNUTRITION (SAM)** were admitted for treatment between January and August 2022. 492,000 children are affected by SAM nationwide ([UNICEF, Sept. 2022](#)).
- 2022 was marked by the **DETERIORATION OF THE SECURITY SITUATION** in new departments in the regions of Diffa, Tahoua and Tillabéri.
- The numbers of IDPs and refugees have increased by 42.6% and 2%, respectively, compared to last year (GHO 2023). As of 30 Sept. 2022, the Government has reported **376,000 IDPS AND 253,000 REFUGEES**.
- At least 25 weekly markets in six departments of the Tillabéri region are closed ([OCHA, Sept. 2022](#)).
- 327,000 PEOPLE** were affected by floods in 2022.

According to a study conducted by Plan International in August 2022 in Tillabéri (Ouallam and Torodi) and Tahoua through 41 focus groups discussions:

- About **80% OF THE HOUSEHOLDS CONSUMED LESS PREFERRED FOOD** in at least 4 days in the last 7 days.
- At least **76% BORROWED FOOD** from relatives and friends at least 3 times in the last 7 days.
- About **68% LIMITED PORTIONS OF THEIR MEALS** in at least 3 days in the last 7 days.
- At least **61% OF ADULTS REDUCED FOOD INTAKE** to allow children to eat.
- 58% DISPOSED OF PRODUCTIVE ASSETS** including small ruminants to meet their basic needs.
- Around **32% DID NOT EAT ALL DAY IN AT LEAST 3 TIMES** in the last 7 days.

PLAN INTERNATIONAL'S RESPONSE

Plan International implements and advocates for its response plan in the Central Sahel by working with a wide range of partners - UN agencies, humanitarian organisations and research institutions - to combat food insecurity with an integrated approach, from agriculture and macroeconomic stability to social protection, health, WASH and economic empowerment.

Acute food insecurity is likely to deteriorate which implies a need to scale-up interventions by:

- Delivering immediate, life-saving assistance to those in the most urgent needs including food security initiatives for children and pregnant women/girls
- Supporting familial agriculture production systems
- Addressing specific negative coping strategies affecting girls during hunger crisis and other protection risks to advance gender equality and children and girls' rights
- Protecting communities' livelihoods and building community resilience through early recovery actions.

Various approaches are being implemented and other being considered to address the hunger crisis and to anticipate the deterioration of the situation, including:

- Multipurpose unconditional cash transfer
- Support to livelihoods and Income Generating Activities (IGAs) through capacity building, equipment, and cash transfer with the possibility to implement the Food Assistance for Assets¹ approach
- Food distribution as component of education and protection projects
- Improvement of the nutritional status of children and pregnant women through mobile clinics and awareness raising (the Positive Deviance Hearth² approach may be introduced)
- Agricultural support through a market-based approach and strengthening of familial farming
- Support to participatory and sustainable natural resources management and climate-adapted farming
- Graduation approach model, targeting the most vulnerable communities through cash-based assistance, training, economic empowerment, financial literacy training, entrepreneurship, and saving skills for a defined period of time
- Policy support and advocacy by establishing social accountability mechanisms that will empower communities to claim their rights through social and leadership structures.

FUNDING

Plan International's target funding for the response to the hunger crisis in the Central Sahel stands at about €22.7 million with a **FUNDING GAP OF ABOUT €17.1 MILLION AS OF NOVEMBER 2022.**



¹ Food Assistance for Assets (FFA) aims to address the most food-insecure people's immediate food needs with cash, vouchers or food transfers while improving their long-term food security and resilience (WFP).

² Positive Deviance Hearth (PDH) aims at scaling up positive nutritional practices within communities to be implemented by the majority of people with the involvement of both women and men.



FURTHER PUBLICATIONS:

[Hunger crisis and its impact on girls policy brief - Sept. 2022](#)

[Girls' rights and global hunger crisis report - Oct. 2022](#)

[Child protection and food security report - Oct. 2022](#)

[Burkina Faso CVA feasibility study key findings - Sept. 2022](#)

[Niger CVA feasibility study key findings - Sept. 2022](#)

[Mali CVA feasibility study key findings - Sept. 2022](#)

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Plan International is fully committed to providing a safe, protective and supportive environment for all children, young boys and girls in all their diversity. Their welfare, development and dignity will at all times be of paramount consideration.