

## FOOD INSECURE POPULATION IN THE EAST AND CENTRAL AFRICA REGION

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**Abstract:** This paper presents the situation of food insecurity in the East and Central Africa region using the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC). Lack of availability to the types and quantities of food required for each family member to enjoy an active and healthy lifestyle is known as food insecurity. Someone who has ran out of food and gone for a day or more without eating is considered to be severely food insecure. In other words, it's probable that they've experienced hunger. Although the extremity of the scale is severe food insecurity, even mild food insecurity is concerning.

**Key words:** food insecurity, famine, households, agriculture

### INTRODUCTION

One of the biggest issues facing humanity is the issue of food insecurity. According to a conservative estimate from the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, 868 million people globally endured serious chronic undernourishment in 2012, while two billion people experienced micronutrient deficiencies. [1] According to Nature (2010) and the IMF (2012), Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest levels of macro- and micronutrient malnutrition and falls behind other areas in the fight against hunger. [5] In an unprecedented and well planned effort to address this issue, charitable foundations, governments and assistance organizations of industrialized countries, international agricultural research institutions, and African governments have joined forces. [2] These actors have committed billions of dollars to the goal of increasing productivity among African smallholder farmers through initiatives like the Rockefeller and Gates Foundations' Alliance for a Green Revolution for Africa (AGRA), the G8's New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition, USAID's Feed the Future Program, and the African Union's Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Program (CAADP), on the theory that higher yields are the key to food security. [12] Tighter integration of African small-scale farmers into formal markets is crucial to this donor-led development approach, often described as a "New Green Revolution for Africa" (GR4A), in order to increase their ability to access yield-boosting inputs and to promote the selling of agricultural surpluses for money. According to this strategy, a more consistent and nutrient-rich food supply and decreased hunger rates would certainly follow. [10]

Reasons why this area is perpetually threatened by food insecurity, famine, and famine risk:

- Food security and livelihoods are affected by climate hazards and shocks: Rainfall is expected to increase during the coming two weeks and over the previous two weeks. [8]

The latest rains will probably cause the vegetation to soon improve even though it is still much below average. Performance during the brief rainy season is still inconsistent with the weekly prediction. While flash floods damaged many locations in the region, rains

increased the availability of grazing and water for pastoral areas and facilitated farmers' capacity to prepare their land for crops. [7]

- The cost of essential foods, inflation, and severe microeconomic problems are expected to stay high.

Despite starting to fall from their peak, staple food costs in the region are still much higher than average due to poor regional and national grain output as well as high prices for food, fuel, and agricultural inputs. Long-running armed disputes, political unrest, resource-based conflicts, and insecurity force population actions, obstruct market accessibility and functionality, limit family access to livelihood options, and limit humanitarian relief. [9]

- A major factor in the region's food insecurity is conflict.

Due to continuous violence and insecurity, which also impacts market accessibility and operation, household access to opportunities for a living, and access to help for humanity, people are still being displaced. [15]

Long-lasting armed disputes, political turmoil, resource-based fights, and insecurity lead to population movements, hinder market accessibility and functionality, restrict humanitarian aid, and bar access to options for securing a household's subsistence.

- Humanitarian Assistance, social Service Access, and displacement are all predicted to get worse. [11]

Due to risk from climatic changes and violence, this region is home to more than 13 million displaced people. They are prone to infectious diseases because they do not have access to adequate nutrition, healthcare, or washing facilities.

There are over 26 million additional individuals in IPC Phase 3 or worse, including 6.1 million in IPC Phase 4, 19.5 million in IPC Phase 3 and 129,000 in IPC Phase 5.

As the months of March, April, and May progress, this number is anticipated to increase due to the present rainy season forecast, rising food and energy costs, and the inadequacy of humanitarian aid to meet the needs of the expanding population in need.

In the worst-case scenario, various regions and groups of people in the area would be at risk of famine if: [4]

- The most vulnerable individuals do not get humanitarian aid, and agricultural production from April to June 2023 is unsuccessful.
- As the conflict gets worse, more people will be displaced, access to markets and their functionality, possibilities for livelihood, and humanitarian aid will all be disrupted, potentially excluding vulnerable populations. [6]

Humanitarian Crisis: Food security is currently deteriorating and there is severe malnutrition in the East Africa region as a result of the following factors:

- Climatic shock and hazard's effects
- Expensive food items
- Shocks to the economy and inflation
- Disease outbreaks, insecurity, and fights [3]

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The paper presents a research based on external data, pertaining to food insecure population in the East and Central Africa region, in March 2023.

The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) is a tool used to improve analysis and decision-making related to food security. Open access to population data from over 30 different countries is provided via the IPC Population Tracking Tool. Users can get resource statistics from the previous three years for offline IPC studies.

## RESEARCH RESULTS

Presenting the food insecure population in the East and Central Africa region, a fact to mention is that DR Congo has the most stressed population (IPC Phase 2), population in crisis (IPC Phase 3) and population in emergency (IPC Phase 4). The population in catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) has the highest value in Somalia. (Table 1)

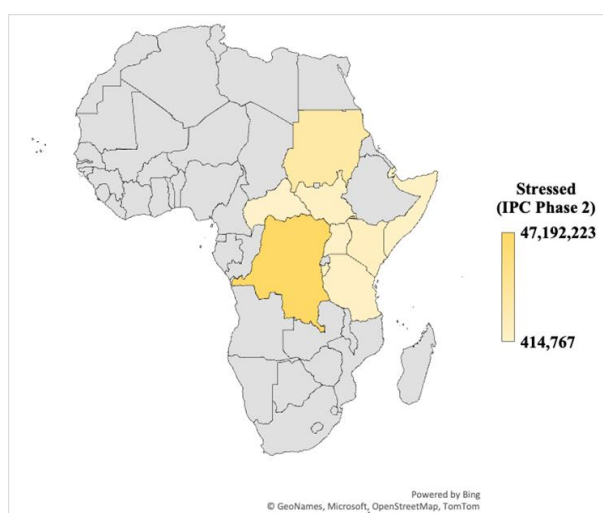
**Table 1.**

**Food insecure population in the East and Central Africa Region, March 2023**

IPC Analyses	Stressed population (IPC Phase 2)	Population in crisis (IPC Phase 3)	Population in emergency (IPC Phase 4)	Population in catastrophe (IPC Phase 5)	IPC Phase 3+
Burundi	3.660.000	1.353.000	51.000	0	1.404.000
Central African Republic	2.004.079	2.011.128	641.565	0	2.652.693
DR Congo	47.192.223	21.707.327	2.813.131	0	24.520.458
Djibouti	414.767	179.778	12.390	0	192.168
Kenya	5.905.188	4.213.529	1.224.686	0	5.438.215
Somalia	3.136.145	3.528.750	1.360.030	96.150	4.984.930
South Sudan	3.840.000	4.311.000	1.966.000	33.000	6.310.000
Sudan	17.746.553	6.189.076	1.549.705	0	7.738.781
Uganda	2.553.245	1.050.595	50.925	0	1.101.520
Tanzania	3.759.399	990.097	0	0	990.097
<b>Total</b>	<b>90.211.599</b>	<b>45.534.280</b>	<b>9.669.432</b>	<b>129.150</b>	<b>55.332.862</b>
<b>IGAD</b>	<b>33.595.898</b>	<b>19.472.728</b>	<b>6.163.736</b>	<b>129.150</b>	<b>25.765.614</b>

Source: FSNWG, 2023

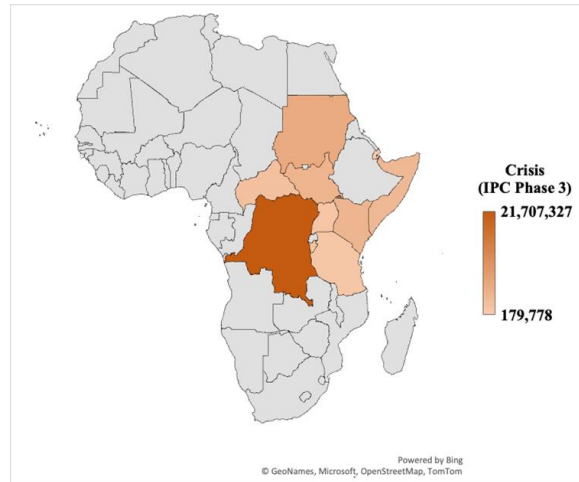
Regarding the stressed population (IPC Phase 2), there are some aspects that need to be highlighted. In the presented region, the number of people in IPC Phase 2 is varying from 414.747 to 47.192.223. The country with the least amount of stressed population is Djibouti while DR Congo is the one with the largest amount with a very considerable difference between them, precisely 46.777.456 number of people. (Figure 1)



**Figure 1. Stressed population (IPC Phase 2)**

Authors own adaptation by [6]

The number of the population in crisis (IPC Phase 3) is decreased comparative with the stressed population but the situation is the same as in the one presented previously, precisely Dr Congo has the highest number of people, 21.707.327, and Djibouti classifies with the most reduced number, 179.778. (Figure 2)



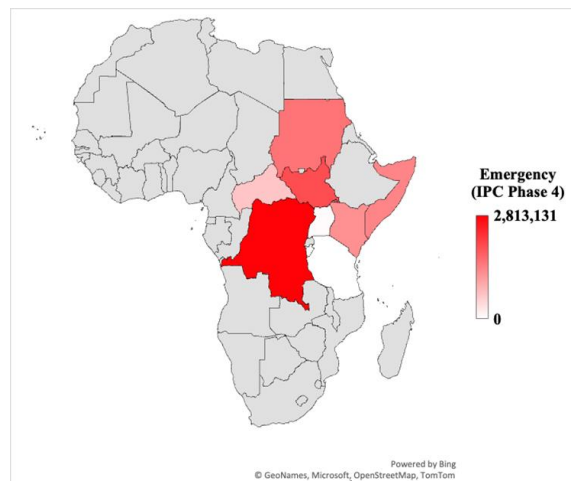
**Figure 2. Population in crisis (IPC Phase 3)**  
*Authors own adaptation by [6]*

Evaluating the case of population in emergency (IPC Phase 4), DR Congo ranks again the country with the highest number of people, precisely 2.813.131, but with a significantly decreased amount than the population analyzed previously. In this context, there is a country with zero cases of population living in emergency, meaningly Tanzania.

Regarding DR Congo, it has to be underlined that according to the number of people affected, the Food and Agriculture Organization classified the DRC as having the world's worst food crisis in December 2020. [14]

Despite the fact that World Food Programme (WFP) has achieved enormous operational progress, the enduring contextual factors that contribute to food insecurity have gotten worse: hunger and war fuel one another, and political unpredictability and climatic shocks have exacerbated humanitarian needs.

Food prices were unaffordable due to this unstable environment, especially in light of the global supply chain disruptions brought on by the conflict in Ukraine. People in the eastern DRC have been forced to flee their homes due to war and terror. (Figure 3) [13]

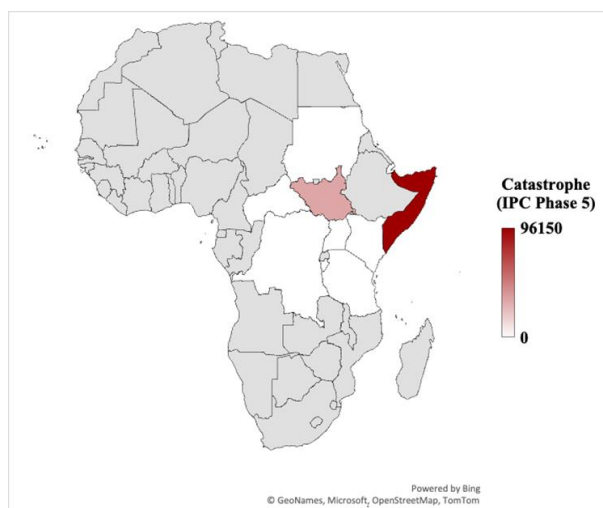


**Figure 3. Population in emergency (IPC Phase 4)**  
*Authors own adaptation by [6]*

Analyzing the population in catastrophe (IPC Phase 5), Somalia is in this situation the country who has the highest number of people, 96.150, followed by South Sudan with 33.000. In the others studied countries there was no registered case.

Due to violent war, quick changes from drought to flooding, and other factors, Somalia is currently experiencing a food crisis. Crops in Somalia, South Sudan, Ethiopia, and Kenya have been devastated by bad rainfall and harvests during the past several years. Due to a lack of clean water and sanitation, families are dying not just from malnutrition but also from illnesses like cholera and measles. People who live below the poverty line, which accounts for more than half of the population, are particularly susceptible to climate change.

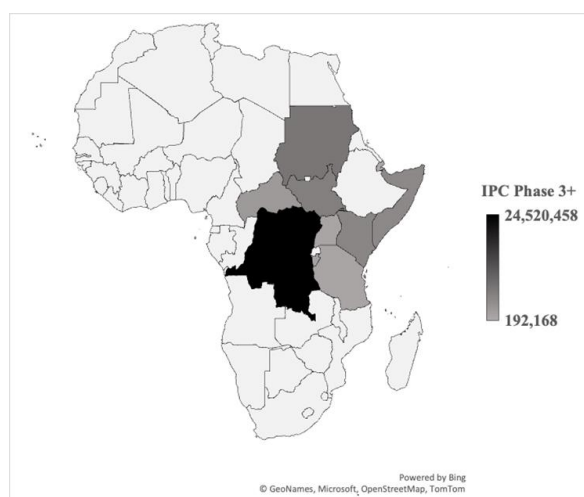
Famine was last declared in Somalia six years ago, and more than 260,000 people died – more than half of them children. Nearly half of the deaths occurred before the famine was even declared. (Figure 4)



**Figure 4. Population in catastrophe (IPC Phase 5)**

*Authors own adaptation by [6]*

Analyzing the population in IPC Phase 3+, DR Congo has the highest number of people, precisely 24,520,458, followed by Sudan with 7,738,781 number of people and South Sudan with 6,310,000 number of people. (Figure 5)



**Figure 5. Population in IPC Phase 3+**

*Authors own adaptation by [6]*

## CONCLUSIONS

Food insecurity is a pressing global issue, affecting millions of people worldwide. In 2012, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization estimated that 868 million people faced chronic undernourishment, with two billion suffering from micronutrient deficiencies. Sub-Saharan Africa, in particular, struggles with malnutrition and hunger, making it a critical region in the fight against food insecurity.

To address this challenge, various actors, including charitable foundations, governments, international agricultural research institutions, and African governments, have united their efforts. They have committed significant resources to initiatives like AGRA, the G8's New Alliance, USAID's Feed the Future Program, and the African Union's CAADP, all aimed at increasing productivity among smallholder farmers in Africa. The belief is that higher yields will lead to improved food security.

In summary, East Africa is grappling with a complex humanitarian crisis marked by food insecurity, malnutrition, and displacement. Various factors, including climate-related challenges, conflict, and economic issues, contribute to the region's vulnerability. Addressing these challenges requires a coordinated effort from both local and international actors to ensure food security and stability.

There are a number of variables that contribute to food insecurity in the African nations that are affected. One of the worst droughts to hit East Africa in 40 years as a result of climate change has left seven million animals dead and exacerbated food and water crises. Communities are as a result experiencing acute food shortages, and many people have either lost their main source of food or income, or sometimes both.

Additionally, the Ukraine crisis drastically increased food prices worldwide, and many nations are still recuperating from the long-term effects of COVID-19.

In parts of Africa, a combination of all these variables is causing disaster on people's lives, families, health, and means of subsistence.

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