

A global food crisis Conflict, economic shocks, climate extremes and soaring fertilizer prices are combining to create a food crisis of unprecedented proportions. Almost half of WFP country operations have already been forced to cut the size and scope of food, cash and nutrition assistance by up to 50 percent. WFP is facing multiple challenges – the number of acutely hungry people continues to increase at a pace that funding is unlikely to match, while the cost of delivering food assistance is at an all-time high because food and fuel prices have increased. Events in Ukraine are further proof of how conflict feeds hunger – forcing people out of their homes, wiping out their sources of income and wrecking countries' economies. On top of increased operational costs, WFP is facing a major drop in funding in 2023 compared to the previous year, reflecting the new and more challenging financial landscape that the entire humanitarian sector is navigating. The effects of the war in Ukraine, including higher natural gas prices, have further disrupted global fertilizer production and exports – reducing supplies, raising prices and threatening to reduce harvests. Furthermore, any fragile progress already made in reducing numbers risks being lost, due to funding gaps and resulting cuts in assistance. High fertilizer prices could turn the current food affordability crisis into a food availability crisis, with production of maize, rice, soybean and wheat all falling in 2022. At least 129,000 people are expected to experience famine in Burkina Faso, Mali, Somalia and South Sudan. This constitutes a staggering rise of almost 200 million people compared to pre-COVID-19 pandemic levels.