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Overview

Hostilities, including bombardment, ground operations and besiegement of the entire population have caused catastrophic levels of acute food insecurity across the Gaza Strip. Around 85% of the population (1.9M people) is displaced, with many people having relocated multiple times, and currently concentrated into an increasingly smaller geographic area.

There is a risk of Famine and it is increasing each day that the current situation of intense hostilities and restricted humanitarian access persists or worsens. The intensification of the hostilities, further reduction in access to food, basic services, and lifesaving assistance, and the extreme concentration or isolation of people in inadequate shelters or areas without basic services are major factors that contribute to increasing this risk.

Between 24 November and 7 December, over 90% of the population in the Gaza Strip (about 2.08 million people) was estimated to face high levels of acute food insecurity, classified in IPC Phase 3 or above (Crisis or worse). Among these, over 40% of the population (939,000 people) was in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) and over 15% (378,000 people) was in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5).

Between 8 December and 7 February, the entire population in the Gaza Strip (about 2.2 million people) is classified in IPC Phase 3 or above (Crisis or worse). This is the highest share of people facing high levels of acute food insecurity that the IPC initiative has ever classified for any given area or country. Among these, about 50% of the population (1.17 million people) is in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) and at least one in four households (more than half a million people) is facing catastrophic conditions (IPC Phase 5, Catastrophe). These are characterized by households experiencing an extreme lack of food, starvation, and exhaustion of coping capacities. Even though the levels of acute malnutrition and non-trauma related mortality might not have yet crossed famine thresholds, these are typically the outcomes of prolonged and extreme food consumption gaps. The increased nutritional vulnerability of children, pregnant and breastfeeding women and the elderly is a particular source of concern.

The latest data shows that virtually all households are skipping meals every day. In four out of five households in the northern governorates and half the displaced households in the southern governorates, people go entire days and nights without eating. Many adults go hungry so children can eat.

Humanitarian food assistance, which was supporting over two thirds of the population before the escalation of the hostilities, is now extremely inadequate to cover the rapidly growing life-threatening needs. The quantities of commodities, including food, allowed to enter the Gaza Strip are largely insufficient; and on most days, these are only reaching a portion of the population of Rafah Governorate. In the northern governorates, as well as Deir Al Balah and parts of Khan Younis, active fighting or partial besiegement are preventing significant portions of the population from accessing humanitarian assistance and basic services (food, water, sanitation, healthcare).

The current import restrictions and the impossibility for the private sector to restart commercial activities are also contributing to the dire food security situation in the Gaza Strip. Given the high level of urbanization, combined with movement restrictions, the depletion of food stocks is likely to cause a sudden deterioration due to the lack of alternative food sources.

The escalation of the hostilities caused widespread damage to food production, including farmland and infrastructure, such as greenhouses, bakeries and warehouses. Other assets and infrastructure (healthcare facilities, water treatment plants, drinking water installations) have also been damaged or destroyed.

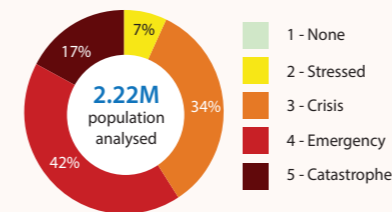


Current Acute Food Insecurity | 24 November - 7 December 2023

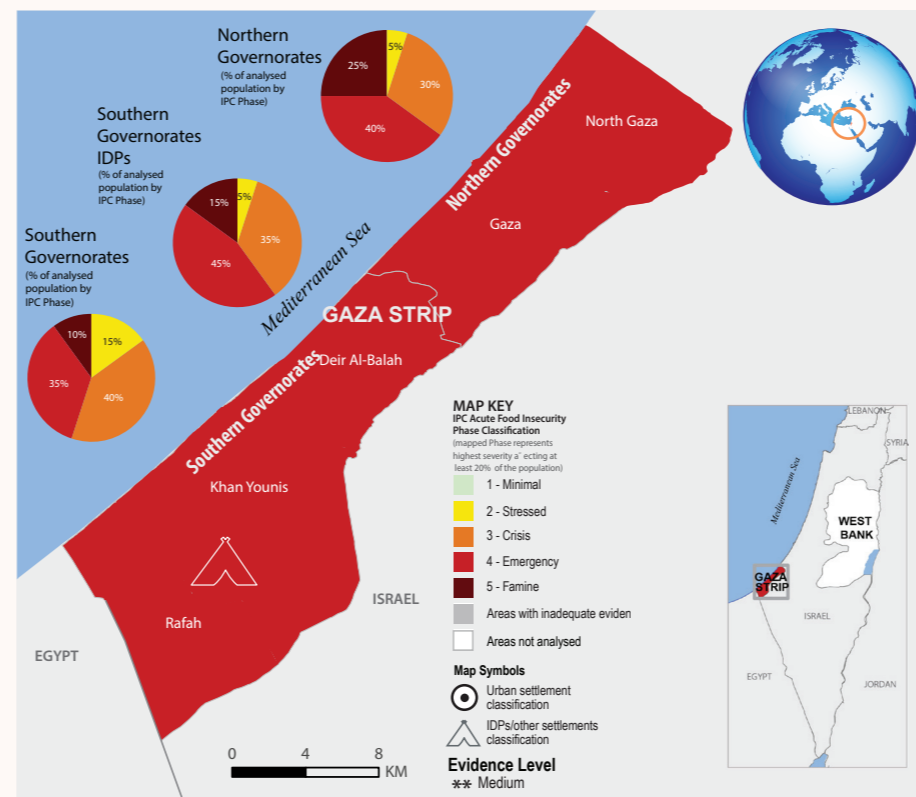
2.08M

Over 90% of the population in the Gaza Strip (about 2.08 million people) was classified in IPC Phase 3 or above (Crisis or worse) between 24 November - 7 December 2023

93% of the analysed population is in IPC Phase 3 or above



Current Acute Food Insecurity Map | 24 November - 7 December 2023



The areas are classified in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency) despite the prevalence of households in IPC Phase 5 (Catastrophe) exceeding 20%. Households may be in IPC Phase 5 (Catastrophe), but the area may not be classified as IPC Phase 5 (Famine) if widespread deaths and acute malnutrition have not yet been expressed at the area level, either due to lack of data on acute malnutrition and mortality or because of the natural time delay expected between food deprivation and collapse of livelihoods, and the consequential increase in acute malnutrition levels and death rates.

Key Driver



Hostilities

Hostilities are the main driver of the extremely high levels of acute food insecurity in the Gaza Strip, and entail widespread, intense, and sustained bombardment from the air, land, and sea, ongoing ground operations and clashes, and the besiegement of the population. Over 19,000 fatalities and 52,000 injuries have been reported.

Hostilities have resulted in the displacement of nearly 2 million people, the damage or destruction of at least one third of all buildings, collapsing basic services including healthcare, unavailability of drinking water, along with economic collapse and the loss of agricultural, livestock, and fishing production. Ongoing restrictions on commercial traffic are exacerbating the dire situation caused by hostilities and significantly contribute to food shortages, even in the absence of active hostilities.

Recommended Actions

The cessation of hostilities is required for the following actions to take place:



Restore safe and sustained humanitarian access

Restore safe and sustained humanitarian access throughout the Gaza Strip to enable the rapid delivery of life-saving multi-sector humanitarian assistance to all people in need. This also entails ensuring complete, safe, and sustained freedom of movement for people throughout Gaza. Border crossings should be reopened, including for commercial traffic. Essential commodities, including but not limited to fuel, food, water, medical supplies, and shelter materials, should be allowed to move into and throughout Gaza without interruption or limitation.



Provide immediate multi-sectoral humanitarian assistance

Provide immediate multi-sectoral humanitarian assistance to the entire population in the Gaza Strip, including isolated populations. Regular and sustained food assistance should be provided to reduce food consumption gaps, save lives and prevent widespread deaths. This should be combined with other types of life-saving assistance, including nutrition, health, WASH, shelter and other non-food items. Meeting the needs of the most vulnerable, particularly infants and young children under five, should be a priority.



Restore basic services

Rapidly restore the functionality of basic services in Gaza to save lives. This includes the immediate restoration of cross-border water pipelines and resumption of electricity distribution. Health facilities and outreach, water infrastructure including desalination and water treatment plants, wells, and distribution networks, facilities for waste management, food processing and production including mills and bakeries, financial facilities including banks and ATMs, telecommunications, and other essential services and infrastructure should be restored to the highest levels of functionality and within the shortest timeframe possible.

Acute Food Insecurity Phase name and description

- IPC Phase 1 (None/Minimal):** Households are able to meet essential food and non-food needs without engaging in atypical and unsustainable strategies to access food and income.
- IPC Phase 2 (Stressed):** Households have minimally adequate food consumption but are unable to afford some essential non-food expenditures without engaging in stress-coping strategies.
- IPC Phase 3 (Crisis):** Households either have food consumption gaps that are reflected by high or above-usual acute malnutrition; or are marginally able to meet minimum food needs but only by depleting essential livelihood assets or through crisis-coping strategies.
- IPC Phase 4 (Emergency):** Households either have large food consumption gaps that are reflected in very high acute malnutrition and excess mortality; or are able to mitigate large food consumption gaps but only by employing emergency livelihood strategies and asset liquidation.
- IPC Phase 5 (Catastrophe/ Famine):** Households have an extreme lack of food and/or other basic needs even after full employment of coping strategies. Starvation, death, destitution and extremely critical acute malnutrition levels are evident. For famine classification, area needs to have extreme critical levels of acute malnutrition and mortality.

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Most Likely Scenario Key Assumptions – 8 December 2023 – 7 February 2024

Hostilities: The Gaza Strip will likely remain under siege while bombardment by air, land, and sea continues, and ground operations escalate and expand. This includes the continuation of ground operations and clashes in the northern governorates and their broadening and intensification in southern governorates.

Displacement, Concentration, and Isolation: Nearly the entire population of Gaza will likely be displaced, with a high concentration in the Al Mawasi area and throughout Rafah governorate. Populations remaining in the northern governorates, including Gaza and North Gaza, are expected to remain highly isolated and most areas north of Rafah governorate will likely have isolated populations inaccessible to humanitarian organizations.

Multi-sector Humanitarian Assistance Delivery: Although humanitarian assistance is planned, the number of trucks entering the Gaza Strip daily, which is still largely insufficient, will likely remain unchanged, with at least intermittent disruption to this inflow due to the hostilities. Most of the assistance will remain within the most accessible areas in Rafah governorate. High restrictions on the entry of fuel into Gaza are expected to also limit the onward delivery of assistance.

Humanitarian access throughout Gaza will likely decline, with no delivery of assistance to the northern governorates, highly limited delivery to Deir al Balah governorate (Middle Area) and limited delivery to Khan Younis governorate. Growing civil unrest resulting from continued hostilities and their humanitarian consequences, is expected to further challenge humanitarian access.

Three scenarios were envisaged for this analysis. The most likely scenario is expected to have a higher chance of occurring during the projection period compared to the alternative scenarios, i.e. a worst-case scenario and a best-case scenario with a reasonable chance of occurring.

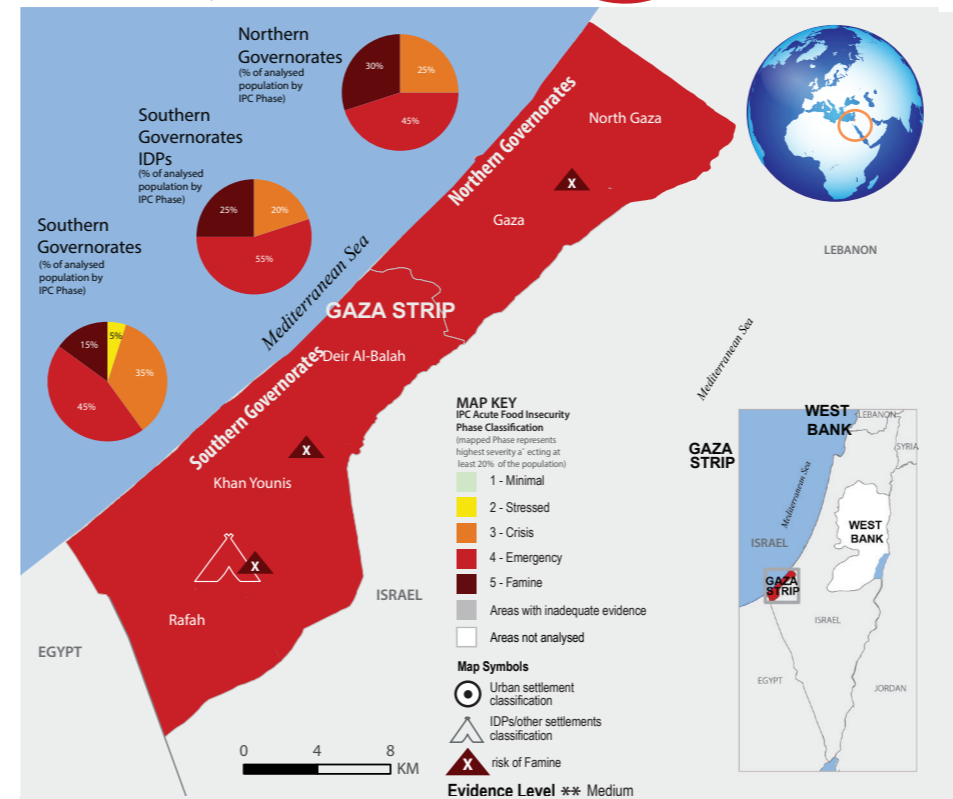
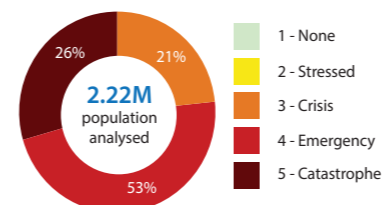


Projected Acute Food Insecurity | 8 December 2023 - 7 February 2024

2.22M

The entire population in the Gaza Strip (about 2.2 million people) is classified in IPC Phase 3 or above (Crisis or worse) between 8 December 2023 - 7 February 2024

100% of the analysed population is in IPC Phase 3 or above



The areas are classified in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency) despite the prevalence of households in IPC Phase 5 (Catastrophe) exceeding 20%. Households may be in IPC Phase 5 (Catastrophe), but the area may not be classified as IPC Phase 5 (Famine) if widespread deaths and acute malnutrition have not yet been expressed at the area level, either due to lack of data on acute malnutrition and mortality or because of the natural time delay expected between food deprivation and collapse of livelihoods, and the consequential increase in acute malnutrition levels and death rates.

Famine Review Committee conclusions

Given that the evidence available surpassed one of the famine thresholds, the Famine Review Committee (FRC) was activated to review the classifications performed by the IPC Analysis Team.

- For the current and projection period, the FRC concluded that the estimation of the population in IPC Phase 5 (Catastrophe) done by the IPC Analysis Team, is plausible. However, for the projection period, the FRC finds that the estimate of households in IPC Phase 5 (Catastrophe) reported in this document is conservative and is likely to be higher.
- The FRC also considers that, due to the expansion of high-intensity hostilities and the extremely high and growing level of displacement in the southern governorates, the entire population (both residents and displaced populations) of Rafah, Khan Younis, and Deir al Balah (Middle Area) will experience similar conditions.
- The FRC noted that the famine threshold for acute food insecurity has already been exceeded. Furthermore, the situation is deteriorating rapidly and famine thresholds for both acute malnutrition and non-trauma mortality may also be breached within the next six months.
- The FRC concluded that there is a risk of Famine occurring within this timeframe if the situation of intense conflict and restricted humanitarian access persists over time or worsens and that this risk increases every day. However, the FRC did not reach technical consensus on whether famine thresholds could be breached before early February 2024. Given the findings of the analysis, continuous monitoring of the hostilities, humanitarian access, food security, health, WASH, nutrition, and non-trauma mortality outcomes is necessary to monitor the ongoing risk of famine.
- The FRC warns that the only way to eliminate any risk of Famine is to stop the deterioration of health, nutrition, food security, and mortality through the restoration of health and WASH services, and the provision of safe, nutritious, sufficient food to the whole population.
- The cessation of hostilities and the restoration of humanitarian space to deliver this multi-sectoral assistance and restore services are essential first steps in eliminating any risk of Famine.

Northern Governorates

- The northern governorates of Gaza and North Gaza are of particular concern. In the most likely scenario, populations in the northern governorates will continue to face prolonged food consumption gaps, inadequate access to food, diminishing sources of food, extremely limited access to basic services and freedom of movement. Agricultural production will be negligible as fields were destroyed, damaged, or are inaccessible.
- Commercial imports are not expected to resume, and humanitarian assistance will likely be further reduced due to challenges in accessing isolated populations, limited availability of fuel for operations, and growing number of areas with active fighting. Food stocks will not be replenished, and markets will remain non-functional.
- Access to safe water will be highly limited, while health services are expected to be largely unavailable. Four months after the beginning of the escalation, by the end of the projection period, households will likely have depleted remaining food sources, their coping capacity will have nearly collapsed, and already severe health, water, and sanitation issues are expected to exacerbate further. As the functionality of health and wash services continues to deteriorate, the risk of spread of water-borne disease and epidemics increases.

Southern Governorates – Internally Displaced Persons

- IDPs in the southern governorates will face continued and repeated displacement. An additional 300,000 people are expected to be newly displaced during the projection period. Conditions for IDPs inside and outside shelters are expected to deteriorate due to colder weather, repeated displacements, and the expansion of the hostilities into new urban areas.
- While some displaced populations may be geographically closer to the Rafah crossing, where minimally functional basic services and markets exist and some humanitarian assistance is provided, others will become isolated due to movement restrictions or active fighting.
- Already critical food consumption gaps are expected to rapidly worsen. Considering the expected expansion of the hostilities and new orders to evacuate, current shelters or settlement sites may no longer be a feasible option as the population is likely to move further South and Southwest.
- In overcrowded shelters, extremely poor water, sanitation and hygiene conditions are likely to result in increased health risks, including the rapid spread of water-borne disease and epidemics. Access to food is expected to reduce as the concentration of IDPs overwhelms shelter capacity and food distributions at previously accessible shelters become unfeasible.

Southern Governorates – Residents

- The hostilities will likely cause the remaining residents in the southern governorates to become displaced. Residents who are unable to relocate due to insecurity, health or physical impairment may be forced to remain in areas with active hostilities and become isolated.
- Available food sources and food stocks are expected to reduce along the displacement route as more IDPs are pushed into increasingly smaller areas with higher competition and decreasing service capacity.
- Access to food is expected to deteriorate as market functionality declines and limited stocks become unaffordable. Agricultural production will likely be minimal as agricultural assets and land are inaccessible, damaged, or destroyed, while any remaining livestock assets will continue to reduce.
- With large areas under recent orders to evacuate, and ground operations ongoing in Khan Younis city and Governorate, access to health, water and other essential services is expected to decrease as more facilities become unavailable or inaccessible.

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Best-case Scenario with a reasonable chance of occurring
8 December 2023 - 7 February 2024

Hostilities: Under this scenario, hostilities are expected to substantially scale down throughout all the Gaza Strip, including through an increase in the permeability of the siege, a large reduction in the coverage, frequency, and lethality of bombardment, and limited, short ground operations. Deaths due to hostilities would decrease substantially. No major civil unrest would occur.

Humanitarian Assistance Delivery: The number of trucks entering Gaza would increase to the logistical maximum of Rafah and any other open crossings, reaching pre-escalation levels. Humanitarian access would significantly improve, allowing for multi-sector humanitarian assistance to be delivered throughout Gaza. Fuel deliveries would increase substantially.

Displacement, Concentration and Isolation: Further displacement would occur in some areas, especially Khan Younis city, before a substantial scale down of the hostilities. Once this occurs, freedom of movement would increase and people would be allowed, albeit with some restrictions, to move between the northern and southern governorates.

Humanitarian Consequences: A large scale down of the hostilities would allow the safe and sustained delivery of multi-sector humanitarian assistance throughout the Gaza Strip. People would see a large increase in access to food and minimal basic services, especially healthcare and safe drinking water. Acute food insecurity would decline substantially, though the damage to the Gaza Strip food system would not be undone in the short-term.

Worst-case Scenario with a reasonable chance of occurring
8 December 2023 - 7 February 2024

Hostilities: Under this scenario, hostilities are expected to intensify throughout the Gaza Strip, and include the return to near-complete siege, bombardment intensification, and expanded ground operations. This would involve the destruction of the vast majority of buildings and a significant increase in civilian deaths. Civil unrest would intensify.

Humanitarian Assistance Delivery: Few trucks carrying humanitarian food assistance would enter the Gaza Strip on any given day. However, on most days, no food trucks would be able to access the Gaza Strip. No commercial trucks and very limited quantities of fuel would enter. The provision of humanitarian assistance would only occur in Rafah governorate.

Displacement, Concentration and Isolation: The entire population would likely be rapidly displaced, and a large portion extremely concentrated in inadequate shelters or areas with no access to basic services. Some would be unable to relocate due to insecurity or other challenges and become isolated.

Humanitarian Consequences: Food scarcity would deepen, with little to no food available in the governorates of North Gaza, Gaza, and Deir al Balah (Middle Area), due to very low or no food production and the collapse of markets. Remaining healthcare would largely collapse and access to water would be severely limited, especially in Deir al Balah (Middle Area), Gaza, and North Gaza. High risk of disease outbreak and extremely poor health and hygiene conditions. Acute food insecurity would worsen substantially.

Risk Factors to Monitor

Hostilities: Changes in frequency, intensity, and/or geographic scope of hostilities; social cohesion and law and order.

Humanitarian Access and Delivery of Humanitarian Assistance: Humanitarian access, including for entry into the Gaza Strip and to reach all populations in need throughout Gaza; and delivery of humanitarian assistance, including food assistance.

Displacement, Concentration, and Immobilization: Rate and magnitude of displacement and conditions of displaced populations, including isolated populations.

Access to Basic Services: Availability, functionality and accessibility of health, water, sanitation, and other systems essential for survival, as well as key supplies, such as medicine.

Analysis Approach

The IPC acute food insecurity analysis was conducted remotely from 5 to 8 December by around 30 experts from 17 agencies, applying standard IPC protocols. The analysis relied on publicly available data from a wide range of sources. While substantial information on contributing factors to food and nutrition security was available from diverse sources, no recent data was available on the prevalence of acute malnutrition and non-trauma mortality in the Gaza Strip. This data would be key to monitor the situation and to update this analysis. Data on food security outcomes was collected through Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews. A rigorous assessment of the characteristics of this survey concluded that, despite the extremely complex environment in which the information was collected, the data meets the minimum requirements set by IPC standards, including with regards to the methodology, minimum required observations, timeliness, and response rate, which is aligned with standards in the region.

The food security situation in the West Bank was not analysed, however, should data meeting IPC minimum requirements become available, the IPC initiative will explore the opportunity to conduct an IPC analysis on the West Bank.

The IPC initiative acknowledges that this analysis was conducted in rapidly changing environment. For this reason, three scenarios were envisaged for the projection period.



About the IPC risk of Famine

For the IPC, risk of Famine...

... refers to a reasonable probability of an area going into Famine in the projected period. While this is not perceived necessarily as the most-likely scenario, it is a scenario that, generally speaking, has a realistic chance of occurring.

... complements the Famine projections of the most likely scenario by providing insights into potential Famine if prospects evolve in a worse manner than anticipated.

... differs from Famine projections because it focuses on a worst-case scenario that has a reasonable and realistic chance of happening.

... is a statement about the potential deterioration of the situation from what is expected. It is not a new classification, and it is not to be accompanied by population estimates.

... is an additional assessment that focuses on assessing if the area could realistically go into Famine during the projected period. Not all areas need to undergo assessment for Risk of Famine.

IPC Phase Five Explained

Catastrophe: IPC Phase 5 Catastrophe can only be classified at household level, not at area level. An area might have some households in IPC Phase 5 Catastrophe linked to very high levels acute food insecurity. However, an entire area can only be classified in IPC Phase 5 Famine if this high level of acute food insecurity is accompanied by certain levels of acute malnutrition and mortality.

Famine: IPC Phase 5 Famine can only be classified at area level. In a given area, Famine occurs when food security, nutrition and mortality altogether portray famine conditions, meaning at least 20% of the population is in IPC Phase 5 Catastrophe, with about one out of three children being acutely malnourished and two deaths for every 10,000 inhabitants, or four child deaths out of 10,000 children per day, due to outright starvation or to the interaction of malnutrition and disease.

- **Famine with Solid Evidence:** An area is classified in Famine with solid evidence if there is clear and compelling evidence that the Famine thresholds for starvation, acute malnutrition and mortality have been reached.
- **Famine with Reasonable Evidence:** An area is classified in Famine with reasonable evidence if there is clear evidence that two of the three thresholds for starvation, acute malnutrition and mortality have been reached, and analysts reasonably assess from the broader evidence that the threshold from the third outcome has likely been reached.

Download the [IPC Famine Fact Sheet](#) to understand better how the IPC defines and classifies Famine and how it differs from the risk of Famine.

