PAKISTAN - BALOCHISTAN
High food prices, drought, reduced income due to COVID-19, and livestock diseases or deaths are driving food insecurity in Balochistan

Overview

Balochistan is marked with a high prevalence of food insecurity, malnutrition and poverty. In 2021, the food security situation further deteriorated because of high food and fuel prices, drought, livestock diseases and impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Around 0.86 million people (25 percent of the rural population analysed) are estimated to be in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) and around 0.17 million people (5 percent of the rural population) are classified in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency) in the current period (October 2021-March 2022), corresponding to the planting/lean season. These include around 0.68 million people (20 percent of the rural population) in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) and around 0.17 million people (5 percent of the rural population) in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency) in the nine districts analysed. All districts, except Nushki, have at least 5 percent of their population in IPC Phase 3, 4 or 5 (Emergency) and most of the districts have a population of 20-35 percent in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) or 4 (Emergency). Urgent action is therefore required to protect livelihoods and reduce food consumption gaps in Crisis and Emergency phases of food insecurity.

Out of nine analysed districts, eight districts, namely Chagai, Kech, Kharan, Killa Abdullah, Loralai, Panjgur, Pishin and Washuk are classified in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis), whereas Nushki is classified in IPC Phase 2 (Stressed).

The analysis of the projection period (April-June 2022), corresponding to the harvest season of winter crops and sowing season of summer crops, indicates that the number of people in Crisis and Emergency phases is expected to increase slightly to 0.92 million from 0.86 million (27 percent of the analysed rural population). The area phase classification of all nine analysed districts remain unchanged; eight districts are classified in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) while one district is classified in IPC Phase 2 (Stressed), as in the current period.

The analysed districts experienced multiple shocks that include drought, increase in food and fuel prices associated with the COVID-19 impacts, and livestock diseases, which resulted in poor food security outcomes for the current period. Although a slight improvement in food stock and livelihood opportunities will likely occur in the projection period, food access will likely continue to be a challenge, with rising food prices offsetting any positive impacts.

Key Drivers

- **High food prices**
  High food prices of commodities (nationally food prices went up by 9.1 percent for rural consumers, on a year-over-year basis in September 2021) and high inflation led to low purchasing power of households, particularly for low income groups e.g., small farmers, wage labourers, households relying on petty trade, etc.

- **COVID-19**
  The pandemic had an economic impact on income and purchasing power due to limited income opportunities in agriculture and non-agriculture sectors, also resulting in loss of employment.

- **Drought**
  Most of the districts are arid with a high dependency on rainfall. They did not receive adequate rainfall from April to September 2021 and experienced moderate to severe drought conditions. Due to deficiency of rainfall, farmers experienced difficulties and reduction in crop and livestock production.

- **Livestock diseases or deaths**
  Limited/unavailability of water, veterinary services, and declining grazing pastures/fodder caused livestock diseases and deaths, and affected livestock-based livelihoods.
CURRENT IPC ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY FOR OCTOBER 2021 - MARCH 2022

Key for the Map
IPC Acute Food Insecurity Phase Classification
(mapped Phase represents highest severity affecting at least 20% of the population)

- 1 - Minimal
- 2 - Stressed
- 3 - Crisis
- 4 - Emergency
- 5 - Famine

IDPs/other settlements classification
Area receives significant humanitarian food assistance (accounted for in Phase classification)
Areas with inadequate evidence
Areas not analysed

Urban settlement classification
Acceptable
Medium
High
Scarce evidence due to limited or no humanitarian access

Evidence Level
******

Population Table for the current period (October 2021 - March 2022)

| District / Tribal Sub-Division | Total population | Phase 1 | Phase 2 | Phase 3 | Phase 4 | Phase 5 | #people | % | #people | % | #people | % | #people | % | % | #people | % | Area Phase | #people | % |
|-------------------------------|------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----|---------|----|---------|----|---------|----|--------|---------|----|---------|----|---------|----|---------|
| Chagai                        | 249,006          | 87,152  | 35      | 87,152  | 35      | 62,252  | 25      | 12,450| 5       | 0  | 0       | 0  | 3       | 74,702| 30 |
| Kech                          | 701,922          | 245,673 | 35      | 280,769 | 40      | 140,384 | 20      | 35,096| 5       | 0  | 0       | 0  | 3       | 175,480| 25 |
| Kharan                        | 123,264          | 49,306  | 40      | 36,979  | 30      | 30,816  | 25      | 6,163 | 5       | 0  | 0       | 0  | 3       | 36,979| 30 |
| Killa Abdullah                | 712,097          | 320,444 | 45      | 249,234 | 35      | 106,815 | 15      | 35,605| 5       | 0  | 0       | 0  | 3       | 142,420| 20 |
| Loralai                       | 364,262          | 91,066  | 25      | 145,705 | 40      | 109,279 | 30      | 18,213| 5       | 0  | 0       | 0  | 3       | 127,492| 35 |
| Nushki                        | 149,608          | 89,765  | 60      | 52,363  | 35      | 7,480   | 5       | 0    | 0       | 0  | 0       | 0  | 2       | 7,480 | 5  |
| Panjgur                       | 245,062          | 110,278 | 45      | 61,266  | 25      | 49,012  | 20      | 24,506| 10      | 0  | 0       | 0  | 3       | 73,518| 30 |
| Pishin                        | 672,749          | 269,100 | 40      | 235,462 | 35      | 134,550 | 20      | 33,637| 5       | 0  | 0       | 0  | 3       | 168,187| 25 |
| Washuk                        | 171,756          | 68,702  | 40      | 51,527  | 30      | 42,939  | 25      | 8,588 | 5       | 0  | 0       | 0  | 3       | 51,527| 30 |
| Total                         | 3,389,726        | 1,331,484| 39      | 1,200,456| 35     | 683,527 | 20      | 174,259| 5       | 0  | 0       | 0  | 857,786| 25 |        |        |    |         |    |        |    |

Note: A population in Phase 3+ does not necessarily reflect the full population in need of urgent action. This is because some households may be in Phase 2 or even 1 but only because of receipt of assistance, and as a result they may be in need of continued action. This IPC classification met the Medium evidence level (**). IPC analyses produce estimates of populations by IPC Phase at area level. Marginal inconsistencies that may arise in the overall percentages of totals and grand totals are attributable to rounding.
CURRENT ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY SITUATION OVERVIEW, KEY DRIVERS AND LIMITING FACTORS OCTOBER 2021 - MARCH 2022

Current Situation Overview

This IPC analysis focuses on the rural population of nine districts of Balochistan province, namely, Chagai, Kech, Kharan, Killa Abdullah, Loralai, Nushki, Panjgur, Pishin and Washuk. Geographically, Killa Abdullah, Pishin, Nushki and Chagai districts border with Afghanistan, and Chagai, Kech, Panjgur and Washuk border with Iran. Almost all analysed districts have desert areas and are prone to moderate to severe drought. Overall, around 0.68 million are in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) and around 0.17 million people are in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency). Furthermore, 1.2 million people are in IPC Phase 2 (Stressed). Eight districts are classified in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) and one district is in IPC Phase 2 (Stressed). Chagai, Kharan, Loralai, Panjgur and Washuk have 30 percent or more of their population in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis), while Pishin and Kech both have 25 percent of their population in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) or above.

Hazards and Vulnerabilities

Overall, more than half (56 percent) of the surveyed households reported agriculture and livestock-based activities as their primary source of livelihood in the analysed districts during the household assessment. Furthermore, 20 percent reported being self-employed or being employees or owning businesses in non-agriculture sectors, 14 percent reported engaging in non-agriculture wage labour, and 9 percent reported having other sources of livelihood (pension allowance, charity/zakat/gifts, and home-based work like handicraft).

The main shocks affecting the area have been drought, high food prices, livestock diseases, and COVID-19 impacts, affecting access to food and purchasing power. The lack of rain in the Kharif 2021 season and moderate to severe drought conditions have also impacted food production and pasture conditions. As per a Drought Alert issued in June 2021 by the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), severe drought conditions were prevailing in Chagai, Kharan, Kech, Panjgur and Washuk, whereas Nushki and Pishin were under moderate drought conditions.

Multiple shocks including drought, higher food and fuel prices, sickness or death of a family member/breadwinner, lost employment or income, livestock diseases and reduction in own production were reported by surveyed households in a household assessment conducted in July/August 2021. Overall, more than two-thirds (70 percent) of the surveyed households reported a reduction in their income due to COVID-19 related lockdown/restrictions. Of those affected by COVID-19 related lockdowns/restrictions, 61 percent reported their household livelihood/income being severely affected by COVID-19, 28 percent reported being moderately affected, and 11 percent reported being slightly affected. Similarly, 56 percent of the surveyed households reported their household livelihood/income being severely affected by drought, 25 percent reporting being moderately affected, 12 percent slightly affected, while 7 percent reported not being affected by drought. Furthermore, 13 percent of the surveyed households reported movement restrictions for goods resulted in impeding or delaying their ability to transport goods to the market, another 13 percent reported closure of international borders affected the purchase of imported inputs or the sale of goods for export or transhumance, while 5 percent were affected by closure of food markets.

Availability

Agriculture is one of the most important sources of livelihood for rural households in the analysed districts. Due to limited availability of water, small landholdings and high dependence on rainfall, most farmers are engaged in small-scale subsistence-level crop production. The distribution of agricultural land ownership shows that 2 percent own up to one acre of land, 26 percent own between one and three acres, 19 percent own between three and five acres, and 49 percent own more than five acres of agricultural land, while only 3 percent of households do not own any agricultural land. In the case of land cultivation in Rabi 2020-21 season, 3 percent of households cultivated up to one acre of land, 45 percent cultivated between one and three acres, 19 percent between three and five acres, 27 percent more than five acres, and 7 percent did not cultivate any land. Due to small landholdings and subsistence-level crop production, on average, the households' production of Rabi 2020-21 season's cereals was sufficient for household consumption for just six months, with around 30 percent of households having stocks lasting less than three months. This makes households more dependent on markets for their food needs. Although food is generally available in the markets, access to food is a major problem for households.

The overwhelming majority of farm households (86 percent) reported difficulties in crop production in the Rabi season 2020-21 such as plant diseases, crop lost or damaged during growing season, poor seed quality, not enough irrigation/rain water, lack of access to fertilizer (not available on markets or prices too high), fuel or electricity to power agricultural equipment, enough seeds (not available on markets or prices too high), insecticides, machinery at the time of sowing/1

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1 The household assessment was conducted by FAO in 25 districts of Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in collaboration with WFP and the Food Security and Agriculture Working Group (FSAWG) and Provincial Disaster Management Authorities of Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in July/August 2021. This assessment was conducted as part of FAO's global project to monitor the agricultural livelihoods, food supply and food security in the context of the COVID-19 situation and other shocks in Pakistan.
harvesting, and labour too expensive or income insufficient to hire labor. Overall, 64 percent of farming households reported problems in selling their crop produce. The problems reported by those households were as follows: higher marketing costs (such as transportation) reported by 65 percent, damages and losses due to delay or inability to physically access markets reported by 45 percent, prices being too low by 42 percent, usual traders or local customers not buying as much as usual by 34 percent and difficulty in processing products (lack of processing inputs/equipment etc.) by 11 percent of farming households2.

The main cereal crops grown in the focused areas are: wheat (the major cereal crop grown in all areas in winter (Rabi season)), rice (mainly grown in Kech), millet (cultivated mainly in Kharan, Loralai, Nushki, Panjgur and Washuk), maize (mainly grown in Chagai, Kharan, Loralai, Nushki and Panjgur), sorghum (cultivated in Chagai, Kech, Loralai, Nushki and Panjgur), and barley (grown in all districts). Except for Washuk, all districts also produce different varieties of vegetables, whereas a major cash crop—cotton—is mainly grown in Kech, Kharan and Nushki. Fruits such as grapes, apples and melons are also grown in some of these districts. Official data from the Crop Reporting Services (CRS) of Balochistan Agriculture Department shows that wheat area (in hectares) has increased by 43 percent whereas wheat production (in tonnes) increased by 41 percent in the analysed districts during the past five years. Out of the nine districts analysed, Chagai, Kharan, Panjgur and Washuk have relatively more production of wheat compared to other districts. Importantly, the Balochistan province, including the analysed districts, rely on the import of wheat from neighbouring provinces (Punjab and Sindh) to meet its consumption needs.

Around one-quarter of the farming households reported a reduction in the planted area and nearly one-third (36 percent) reported a reduction in the production of the main crop of Rabi season 2020-21 due to multiple shocks compared to a normal year. Agricultural support required by farming households to improve crop and livestock production in the next three to six months include cash assistance, animal feed, good quality seeds, fertilizer, veterinary services, pesticides, loans, access to irrigation water, tools, veterinary inputs, access to tractors, restocking animals, marketing support, etc.

Livestock is one of the core assets for rural households in the analysed areas and kept as a source of livelihood as well as for meeting household consumption needs. Nearly all households (98 percent) own livestock. Goats, sheep and poultry are the three most-owned livestock, owned by 67 percent, 20 percent and 15 percent of livestock holders respectively. More than half (54 percent) of livestock holders reported the death of their main livestock during the past six months preceding the household assessment, around half (51 percent) reported the death of their second main livestock, whereas 60 percent reported the death of their third main livestock3. The three main reasons for these deaths of livestock are: livestock diseases, limited availability of drinking water for animals and shortage of fodder/feed. Livestock holders also reported the sale of their livestock during the past six months: main livestock sold by 58 percent livestock holders, second livestock by 46 percent and third livestock by 50 percent. Among the households that sold livestock4, 50 percent reported distress selling to meet food and other needs, 54 percent reported distress selling due to limited availability of fodder, 26 percent reported distress selling due to poor health of the animal whereas 79 percent reported normal sale for earning livelihood.

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The overwhelming majority of livestock holders (87 percent) also reported difficulties in livestock production in the past three months preceding the assessment. Difficulty to purchase feed (prices or access to market), difficulty to access veterinary services and inputs, constrained access to pasture, livestock diseases and constrained access to water are the major difficulties reported. Around 87 percent of livestock holders reported a reduction in pasture areas compared to the three months preceding the assessment, which could be mainly due to drought and lack/limited rainfall in the areas. The livestock holders also reported difficulties in selling their livestock during the past three months preceding the assessment and the main difficulties reported are: higher marketing costs (such as transportation) reported by 84 percent, prices being too low (39 percent), damages and losses due to delay or inability to physically access markets (26 percent) and usual traders or local customers not buying as much as usual reported by 18 percent5.

According to the Seasonal Agro-Climate Outlook for 1st October 2021-30th April 2022, issued by the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD): “Central Balochistan (where Kharan is located) is expected to receive three to four spells of light to moderate (with few heavy downpours) rainfall from the start of December till April. Therefore, the rains in December till February may benefit the wheat crop in providing good soil moisture, but the cloudiness or rains in the end of March may affect the crop in its maturity stages. In case of North-Eastern Balochistan (where Killa Abdullah, Pishin and Loralai are located), it would receive consecutive spells of light to moderate (with few heavy downpours in start of December and February) rainfall mainly during the season. Here in this area, the wheat crop during this period may be benefited from expected rains.” Further, as per the monthly Outlook for October 2021 by the PMD, Chagi, Kharan, Panjgur, Washuk and Kech districts are facing moderate drought conditions. The latest seasonal La Niña forecast suggests that for southwest Pakistan (where most of the analysed districts are located), drier than normal conditions are likely to occur between November 2021 and January 2022.

The above evidence indicates that own production of food is not adequate for household consumption for long, though sufficient food is available in the markets.

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1 Multiple response question.
2 Death of one or more main, second or third main livestock during the past six months.
3 Percentage of livestock holders who sold one or more livestock during the past six months.
4 Multiple response question.
Access

Pakistan is going through high levels of inflation, including food inflation, which is most likely to have adverse impacts on the purchasing power of the population and their access to food, particularly poor and middle income groups. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation data, released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) in October 2021, shows that CPI inflation (general) in Pakistan increased by nine percent on a year-over-year basis in September 2021. Food prices went up by 10.8 percent for urban consumers and 9.1 percent for rural consumers, on a year-over-year basis in September 2021. In particular, prices of essential food items such as wheat flour, rice, pulses, cooking oil and vegetables have spiked since January 2021. In the two major markets surrounding the analysed districts, on average, the price of wheat flour rose by 15 percent and the price of rice by 2 percent. The prices of other food items have also increased substantially, with sugar prices rising by 17 percent, cooking oil/vegetable ghee by 29 percent, masoor pulses by 15 percent, and gram pulses by 5 percent. Similarly, the cost of meat and dairy items have also spiked, with beef prices increasing by 22 percent, chicken by 16 percent, mutton by 5 percent and milk prices by 5 percent. Some food commodities prices, however, decreased, compared with January 2021, with moong pulse price levels decreasing by 13 percent, mash pulses by 8 percent and the price of eggs by 6 percent.

The inadequate production of cereals at household level raises the dependency on markets for their food needs. Although food is generally available in the markets, the purchasing power of households is considerably low, due to low income, high food and fuel prices due to COVID-19 related restrictions, the level of poverty in these areas, and the distance to food markets being relatively far, thus having adverse impacts on access to food. Around two-thirds of households are travelling more than 30 minutes to reach the food markets. Nearly all of the households (99 percent) reported that they face problems reaching the market such as due to damaged roads, the high cost of transportation, long distances to markets and unavailability of transport.

The households have also contracted new debts to meet basic household needs during the three months preceding the assessment. Overall, two-thirds (67 percent) of households accumulated new debts, mainly to: cover food needs, medical expenses, purchase of livestock/agricultural inputs, business and contribution to ceremonies. Considering the already limited household income in the area, people are likely to remain in a debt cycle for some time, as their monthly income is not enough to cover debt or payments.

The above evidence indicates that access to food is the major issue in these areas, which contributes to the poor food security situation of households.

Utilization

Access to improved sources of water is 77 percent in the analysed districts, however, quality of water was not assessed. Around 70 percent of households easily access water from the main sources of drinking water. Around 27 percent of households reported they usually use flush toilets; 45 percent of households use the dry pit latrine; 16 percent use the solar/a generator, and ten percent have no access to electricity.

In the case of housing status of households, 76 percent live in non-cemented (Kaccha) houses, 11 percent live in semi-cemented homes (Semi Pakka), 8 percent in cemented (Pakka) houses and 5 percent living in chhorna/wooden/thatch houses. Overall, 78 percent of households have access to electricity from a government source, 12 percent reported using solar/a generator, and ten percent have no access to electricity.

The limiting factors for the key dimensions of food security (availability, access and utilization) vary across the analysed districts. Overall, food availability is considered a ‘major’ limiting factor for Chagai and Washuk districts. Access is considered a ‘major’ limiting factor for Chagai, Kech, Kharan, Loralai, Panjgur, Pishin and Washuk districts. The major limiting factors in term of accessibility are attributed to a number of factors such as: low income, higher share of food expenditure in total household expenditure, inadequate availability of food commodities, limited sufficiency of cereal crops, high cost of transportation, long distance to markets, reduction in income and rising food prices. Utilization is considered a ‘major’ limiting factor for the Kech district only. For the other eight districts, utilization was considered a minor limiting factor.

Food Consumption Score – Overall, around two-fifths (43 percent) of households have ‘acceptable’ food consumption, nearly 46 percent of households have ‘borderline’ and around one-tenth (11 percent) have ‘poor’ food consumption.

The Household Dietary Diversity Score (HDDS) – Overall, around nine out of ten (88 percent) of households consumed five or more food groups during the previous 24-hour reference period, one-tenth (10 percent) consumed between three and four food groups, while only one percent consumed two or less food groups.

Reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI) – Overall, 15 percent of the households had a score greater than 19, 54 percent had a score of 4-18, whereas nearly one-third (31 percent) had a score of 0-3. Households with an rCSI score of 4-18 and 19+ indicates that food gaps exist in these areas and households are adopting short-term coping strategies to meet their food needs.

The Prevalence of Moderate or Severe Food Insecurity based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) is also an important indicator to assess people’s experience of food insecurity. Overall, half (51 percent) of the households had a FIES score of less than 0.58, which corresponds to IPC Phase 1, 21 percent had a FIES score between 0.58 and 0.36, corresponding to IPC Phase 2, whereas 29 percent had a FIES score of more than 0.36, which corresponds to IPC Phases 3-5.

The households also resorted to livelihood-based coping strategies to meet their food needs. Overall, nine percent of households adopted ‘emergency’ livelihood coping strategies, 58 percent adopted ‘crisis’ strategies, 19 percent adopted ‘stress’ strategies, whereas 15 percent households did not adopt any coping strategy.
Humanitarian Food Assistance

In some districts, the Federal and Provincial Governments, the United Nations, along with international and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), provided support to help improve the livelihoods and food security situation of vulnerable households in 2021 and also planned some support in terms of food assistance, cash assistance, and crops and livestock inputs for 2022. NGOs, such as Care International, partnered with HANDS and the Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP) and with PHF & EU financial support, provided food assistance to 7,700 people in Pishin; cash assistance to 560 people in Kharan, Pishin and Washuk; crop inputs to 1,050 people in Pishin and livestock inputs to 19,064 people in Killa Abdullah, Loarlai, Pishin and Washuk districts. Another 150 people were also assisted with crop inputs in Chagai by Tarqee Foundation.

WFP, in collaboration with Tarqee Foundation and PND-DOH, provided food assistance to 142,350 people in Chagai, Kech and Loarlai, whereas cash support was provided to 15,039 people in Chagai in 2021.

The assistance was included in the current analysis, as captured by the outcome indicators, however, due to missing information regarding the Kcal coverage and the limited coverage in terms of population reached, assistance was not included in the mapping protocols.

PROJECTED IPC ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY FOR APRIL - JUNE 2022

Note: A population in Phase 3+ does not necessarily reflect the full population in need of urgent action. This is because some households may be in Phase 2 or even 1 but only because of receipt of assistance, and as a result they may be in need of continued action. This IPC classification met the Medium evidence level (**). IPC analyses produce estimates of populations by IPC Phase at area level. Marginal inconsistencies that may arise in the overall percentages of totals and grand totals are attributable to rounding.

Population Table for the projection period (April - June 2022)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District / Tribal Sub-Division</th>
<th>Total population</th>
<th>Phase 1 #people %</th>
<th>Phase 2 #people %</th>
<th>Phase 3 #people %</th>
<th>Phase 4 #people %</th>
<th>Phase 5 #people %</th>
<th>Area Phase</th>
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<tr>
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PROJECTED SITUATION APRIL - JUNE 2022

During the projection analysis period (April to June 2022), corresponding to the harvest season of Rabi (winter) crops and sowing season of Kharif (summer) crops, the total population facing high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) is expected to increase to 0.92 million from 0.86 million (27 percent of the analysed population). This shows a seven percent increase of people facing high levels of acute food insecurity from the current to the projection period. Out of the nine analysed districts, eight will remain in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) and one in IPC Phase 2 (Stressed). The slight increase in numbers and severity is expected particularly in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis), because of an expected rise in food prices, influx of Afghan refugees in the bordering districts, limited rainfall and drought conditions.

Most of the analysed areas have both mountainous and desert regions and do not receive adequate rainfall during the monsoon season (usually from July-September) and pre-monsoon season, resulting in low production of cereals and vegetables. Food access is very much dependent on markets and the high food prices and drought conditions are the primary factors exacerbating the high levels of acute food insecurity. Considering the current inflation trends and economic situation, factors such as rising food prices, and high fuel and electricity costs would place further stress on the food security of vulnerable households.

General as well as food inflation are likely to continue, which are expected to result in the low purchasing power of households, particularly for low income groups, e.g., small farmers, wage labors, households relying on petty trades etc. and might place further stress on the food security of vulnerable households, leading to food consumption gaps.

The harvesting of Rabi (winter) crops will be completed during April/May and farming households are expected to have some food stocks from their own production during the projection period, although these are not expected to last long due to subsistence level farming and the expected deficiency of winter rainfall. The below-average precipitation due to deficiency of pre-winter and winter rainfall and the likelihood of La Niña and drought is likely to affect wheat crop production in the rain-fed areas.

Labour opportunities are expected to increase slightly during the harvest and plantation period, contributing to food and income for the people associated with this wage sector. However, with the recent drought, if agriculture conditions worsen, there may be an adverse impact on agriculture, livestock and wage labour opportunities.

The COVID-19 situation is improving and with an increase in vaccination coverage, no major restrictions are expected during the projection period.

Religious festivals and events, such as Ramazan and Eid will be celebrated and observed during the projection period. Food consumption is expected to increase due to increased charities and remittances. Family members are also expected to send remittances to their families during these religious festivals, which gives households a temporary spike in income.

Although the overall security situation is stable in most of the districts, a few districts such as Kech, Panjgur and Killa Abdullah are experiencing a security situation that might have adverse implications for food security in these areas.

The current situation in Afghanistan is another factor that cannot be ruled out as Pishin, Killa Abdullah, Nushki and Chagai districts are all bordering Afghanistan, whereas Chagai, Washuk, Panjgur and Kech are bordering Iran. Formal and informal trade takes place between Pakistan and Afghanistan and Iran through Chaman, Taftaan and a porous border. However, after the closure and fencing of the border, the livelihoods of the communities are affected. The emerging conditions in Afghanistan may also push refugees to these areas. According to some preliminary estimates, there is a likelihood of up to 300,000 new refugees arriving in Pakistan if the situation in Afghanistan remains the same or worsens. This will increase pressure on domestic resources, affecting the food security situation.

Key Assumptions

- Price levels are expected to increase due to economic factors and increasing fuel prices.
- Low purchasing power is expected to continue for rural households because of the lingering effect of high food and fuel prices.
- Climatic conditions (La Niña and drought) - as per monthly Outlook for October 2021 by the PMD, Chagi, Kharan, Panjgur, Washuk and Kech districts are facing moderate drought conditions. The latest seasonal La Niña forecast suggests that for southwest Pakistan (where most of the analysed districts are located), drier than normal conditions are likely to occur between November 2021 and January 2022.
- Livestock diseases may increase due to changed climatic conditions (drought).
- Any new influx of refugees may directly affect the existing resources of local communities in districts bordering with Afghanistan.
- Border closure and fencing would seriously affect the livelihoods of traders and wage workers in areas neighbouring Afghanistan and Iran.
- Food stocks are expected to improve slightly because of the harvest during the projection period, however, it may not be sufficient to meet food needs due to subsistence level crop production in the analysed areas.
- Livelihood opportunities for farming households are expected to increase slightly due to the planting and/ or harvesting of crops during the projection period.
- Charity and remittances are expected to increase during Ramazan and Eid ul Fitr which may increase food consumption.
- The COVID-19 situation has improved and no further lockdowns or restrictions are expected.
Considering the above-mentioned factors, it’s expected slightly more opportunities for agriculture and non-agriculture based livelihoods and market-related activities will arise throughout the projection period. That suggests more income, higher food consumption and lower food insecurity during April-June 2022. However, rising general inflation as well as food inflation are likely to offset the expected positive effects of the above-mentioned factors as rising prices are expected to reduce the purchasing power and income of already vulnerable households in the area. Furthermore, own production of wheat, other cereals and pulses are not expected to meet sufficient levels to ensure adequate household consumption. Therefore, the majority of households are likely to remain dependent on markets to access food during the projected period. Livestock diseases such as Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) are also likely to surface during the projection period and have adverse impacts on the health, production and sale of livestock.

Based on all the factors mentioned above, although a change in the phase classification from the current period (October 2021- March 2022) to the projected period (April-June 2022) is not expected, it is likely that there will be a slight increase in number of people (more than 60,000 or about nine percent) facing Crisis levels of food insecurity (IPC Phase 3) during the projection period.

**COMPARISON WITH THE PREVIOUS IPC ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY ANALYSIS**

The previous IPC Acute Food Insecurity (AFI) analysis was conducted in ten districts of Balochistan in March 2021, of which six are also included in this analysis. However, due to different analysis periods in previous rounds, a direct comparison of all previous rounds is not possible. Although some of the key drivers identified in the last analysis were not factors for this round (such as flooding and desert locusts), high food prices and drought conditions continue to impact household food security.

In the March 2021 analysis, it was estimated that 30% of the rural population in the six districts that were also analysed in the October 2021 analysis (Chaghai, Kech, Kharan, Nushki, Panjgur, and Washuk) were experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity between March and June 2021. The projected prevalence between April and June 2022 for the same districts is estimated at 26%, indicating a slight improvement. This change may in part be due to the limited impact of COVID-19 anticipated in 2022, the absence of major flooding events or the impact of desert locusts and other pests on crop production.
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Response Priorities

This analysis shows a worsened food insecurity situation in the analysed districts due to exposure to multiple shocks experienced during 2021. In response to the Crisis and Emergency acute food insecurity situation in the analysed districts, the following immediate response actions are suggested in order to help save lives and livelihoods:

- Improve access to food through appropriate modalities such as food or cash and voucher assistance to reduce food consumption gaps and to protect asset depletion for the populations classified in Emergency (IPC Phase 3).
- Timely provision of quality seeds for high-yielding crops and vegetables, and toolkits, especially to subsistence level farmers. In drought-prone areas, drought resilient crop varieties need to be introduced to ensure sufficient production.
- Training on climate-smart crop and fodder production, including guidance on kitchen gardening.
- Scale up livestock protection and management interventions such as vaccination and deworming campaigns to prevent diseases and access to fodder, multi-nutritional feed and pastures to help in preventing distress sale, livestock programmes to target the vulnerable households and women farmers, and seeding of rangelands to produce quality fodder.
- Provision of livestock/poultry to vulnerable households.
- Construction and rehabilitation of water infrastructure for agriculture and livestock such as tube-wells, water channels and reservoirs for better conservation and management. Resilient water infrastructure can help in reducing the impact of recurring floods and droughts.
- Introduction of livelihood diversification activities for local communities to increase income generation and employment opportunities. Support local communities for alternate business/employment opportunities to increase income generation for those who are involved in border trade and lost their businesses due to border closure/fencing.
- Inclusion of women in economic growth activities (agriculture and non-agriculture) to improve their livelihoods.
- Capacity building of communities on processing and preservation of seasonal produce to enable them to earn higher income from processed fruits and vegetables and meet food requirements in the lean seasons.

Situation monitoring and update

- The food security situation in the analysed areas needs to be monitored regularly due to high levels of acute food insecurity and malnutrition, in addition to the high incidences of poverty and vulnerability of households.
- If macroeconomic trends persist in Pakistan with rising inflation, there could be more adverse effects on the food security situation in the coming months. Projections may also be revised to reflect those changes if necessary.
- It is recommended to conduct regular or seasonal household food security and livelihood assessments/surveys, and IPC Acute Food Insecurity analyses, to monitor the food security situation in these areas and other vulnerable districts of Balochistan, to inform policy makers on the food security situation in the vulnerable areas. To do this, improved mechanisms for regular data collection needs to be put in place.

Risk Factors to Monitor

- Prices of essential food items: The increasing prices of essential food and non-food items is a major risk to the food security of households, and is also expected to erode their purchasing power that needs to be monitored.
- Afghanistan situation: The current situation in Afghanistan can stimulate cross border displacement. In the past, districts have remained hosts for Afghan refugees. The displacement is expected to put enormous pressure on local market structures, labour market, and natural resources that can negatively affect food security dimensions. Informal small-scale influx is already reported in a few areas unofficially, and that can also raise security concerns.
- Climatic conditions (drought): The climatic conditions are crucial to monitor, which may impact agricultural production and livelihoods, and may also cause outbreaks of livestock diseases. The drought conditions are prevailing in five out of the nine analysed districts and lack or limited rainfall in the analysed districts would cause a reduction in the growth of fodder, leading to starvation for animals. Dry conditions will also cause water stress in the cultivated lands/areas due to limited supply of irrigation water for crops. If the moderate drought condition turns to severe in the coming months, then the situation may deteriorate significantly and an update may be required.
- Livestock diseases: Livestock diseases such as Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) outbreaks are likely to surface again.
- Border fencing and closure: Livelihood opportunities have reduced for those engaged in informal trade due to the closure of the border with Afghanistan and Iran. The border fencing has resulted in the stoppage of informal trade and access to markets at both sides of the border. The community at the border now has to travel long distances to reach the market, which has increased their food costs and adversely affects their livelihoods. This factor needs to be monitored in the projection period.
- The COVID-19 situation: Although the incidence rate has declined significantly in Pakistan, the situation still needs to be monitored because of a surge in the cases globally due to new variants.
PROCESS, METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

Process and Methodology

The IPC Acute Food Insecurity analysis was conducted for two time periods. The current period (October 2021-March 2022) analysis was mainly based on data from a household assessment conducted in July/August 2021, along with other secondary information sources. The projected period (April-June 2022) was based on data from the household assessment, other secondary information sources and forward-looking assumptions on drought, rainfall, food prices, crop harvests, the COVID-19 situation and livelihood opportunities. The analysis covered the nine districts of Balochistan, namely: Chagai, Kech, Kharan, Killa Abdullah, Loralai, Nushki, Panjgur, Pishin and Washuk.

A joint training and analysis workshop was held from 18-23 October 2021 in Islamabad, Pakistan. The workshop was attended by officials/staff of federal and provincial government departments, UN organizations, and international and local NGOs. This analysis has been conducted in close collaboration with IPC stakeholders at national and provincial levels, including the Ministry of National Food Security and Research (MNFSR), the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination (MNHR&C), the Pakistan Agriculture Research Council (PARC), the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiative (MPD&SI), the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), the Bureau of Statistics of Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the Provincial Disaster Management Authorities (PDMAs) of Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the Agriculture and Livestock Departments of Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, UN Organizations (FAO, WFP, UNICEF), and international and national NGOs (including: Welthungerhilfe, Concern Worldwide, ACTED, Care International, Action Against Hunger (ACF), Secours Islamique France (SIF), Islamic Relief (IR), HANDS, Tameer-e-Khalaq Foundation (TKF), Fast Rural Development Program (FRDP), Taraqee Foundation (TF), Foundation For Rural Development (FRD), and Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP)). The active participation and support of officials/staff from the above ministries/departments/organizations is highly acknowledged.

The data used in the analysis was organized according to the IPC analytical framework and include data on food security contributing factors and outcome indicators. The data was collected from multiple sources listed below and the analysis was conducted in ISS.

Sources

Data sources used for this analysis included:

• The Household Assessment carried out in 25 districts of Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in July/August 2021. The assessment provided information on a wide range of indicators: both outcome and contributing factors. The outcome indicators included in the analysis are the Food Consumption Score (FCS), the Household Dietary Diversity Score (HDDS), the Household Hunger Score (HHS), the Reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI), Livelihood Coping Strategies and Prevalence of Moderate and Severe Food Insecurity based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES);
• Food prices data from the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS);
• The projected population based on 2017 Population Census by PBS;
• Food and cash assistance, agriculture support, livelihood support/other distribution from WFP, FAO, INGOs and NGOs;
• Precipitation/rainfall and the Seasonal Agro-Climate Outlook from PMD;
• Crop production data from the CRS, Agriculture Department, Balochistan.

The Evidence Level of this analysis is Medium**.

Limitations of the Analysis and Recommendations for Future Analyses

• A limited amount of evidence informing the projection was available, with weather forecasts still quite probabilistic.
• Humanitarian Food Assistance (HFA) data was not available in the format allowing to extrapolate Kilo-calories coverage.
• The Household Hunger Score (HHS) module in the household assessment used slightly different response codes, and was therefore assigned a lower reliability score and used as an indirect outcome indicator.
• The household assessment and the IPC analysis have covered only rural areas of nine districts. As such, the results should not be extrapolated or generalized as representative of the whole population in the area, but only of rural households.

6 The household assessment was conducted by FAO in 25 districts of Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in collaboration with WFP and the Food Security and Agriculture Working Group (FSAWG) and the Provincial Disaster Management Authorities of Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in July/August 2021. This assessment was conducted as part of FAO's global project to monitor the agricultural livelihoods, food supply and food security in the context of the COVID-19 situation and other shocks in Pakistan.
7 See above footnote 6.
Acknowledgements

The IPC training was facilitated by Abdul Majid (IPC Regional Coordinator for Asia and NANE Region) and co-facilitated by Raja Ajmal Jahangeer and Asifa Ghani (FAO), Aman ur Rehman Khan (WFP), Kazim Jafri (Sindh Bureau of Statistics), Amir Ali (UNICEF) and Shafqat Ullah (Concern Worldwide). The IPC analysis was facilitated by Abdul Majid (IPC Regional Coordinator for Asia and NANE Region) and co-facilitated by Raja Ajmal Jahangeer, Aman ur Rehman Khan, Amir Ali, Shafqat Ullah, Habib Wardag (TKF), Mashal Riaz (NDMA), Nasir Hameed (Agriculture Department Balochistan) and Muhammad Iqbal (Livestock Department Balochistan). The support of Feroz Ahmed (IPC Regional Trainer) and Duaa Syed (IPC Food Security Analyst) for data quality review, uploading evidences in ISS, revision of analysis areas in ISS and for participating in the plenary discussion is highly appreciated. Support of Muhammad Afzal (FAO) for uploading data in ISS and Areesha Asghar (FAO) for preparation of maps is also highly appreciated. The valuable support of Syed Ghafoor Agha, Deputy Director, Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Balochistan, for providing coordination support for household assessment 2021 is also highly acknowledged. Furthermore, support from WHH for co-financing this IPC workshop is also highly acknowledged.

Acute Food Insecurity Phase name and description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 1</th>
<th>Phase 2</th>
<th>Phase 3</th>
<th>Phase 4</th>
<th>Phase 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None/Minimal</td>
<td>Stressed</td>
<td>Crisis</td>
<td>Emergency</td>
<td>Catastrophe/Famine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households are able to meet essential food and non-food needs without engaging in atypical or unsustainable strategies to access food and income.</td>
<td>Households have minimally adequate food consumption but are unable to afford some essential non-food expenditures without engaging in stress coping strategies.</td>
<td>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 non-food livelihood assets or through crisis coping strategies.</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>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, areas needs to have extreme critical levels of acute malnutrition and mortality.</td>
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What is the IPC and IPC Acute Food Insecurity?

The IPC is a set of tools and procedures to classify the severity and characteristics of acute food and nutrition crises as well as chronic food insecurity based on international standards. The IPC consists of four mutually reinforcing functions, each with a set of specific protocols (tools and procedures). The core IPC parameters include consensus building, convergence of evidence, accountability, transparency and comparability. The IPC analysis aims at informing emergency response as well as medium and long-term food security policy and programming.

For the IPC, Acute Food Insecurity is defined as any manifestation of food insecurity found in a specified area at a specific point in time of a severity that threatens lives or livelihoods, or both, regardless of the causes, context or duration. It is highly susceptible to change and can occur and manifest in a population within a short amount of time, as a result of sudden changes or shocks that negatively impact on the determinants of food insecurity.

Contact for further Information

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Classification of food insecurity and malnutrition are conducted using the IPC protocols, which are developed and implemented worldwide by the IPC Global Partnership - Action Against Hunger, CARE, CILSS, EC-JRC, FAO, FEWSNET, Global Food Security Cluster, Global Nutrition Cluster, IGAD, Oxfam, PROGRESAN-SICA, SADC, Save the Children, UNICEF and WFP.

IPC Analysis Partners: