Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
Evidence and Standards for Better Food Security and Nutrition Decisions

PAKISTAN - SINDH

High food prices, drought and reduced income due to COVID-19 are driving food insecurity in nine districts of Sindh

CURRENT OCTOBER 2021– MARCH 2022

2.3M
(23% of the rural population analysed in 9 rural districts of Sindh)

People facing high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above)

IN NEED OF URGENT ACTION

Phase	
Phase 5	0 **People in Catastrophe**
Phase 4	631,500 **People in Emergency**
Phase 3	1,698,400 **People in Crisis**
Phase 2	3,458,600 **People in Stress**
Phase 1	4,438,500 **People in food security**

PROJECTED APRIL -JUNE 2022

2.2M
(22% of the rural population analysed in 9 rural districts of Sindh)

People facing high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above)

IN NEED OF URGENT ACTION

Phase	
Phase 5	0 **People in Catastrophe**
Phase 4	570,400 **People in Emergency**
Phase 3	1,628,700 **People in Crisis**
Phase 2	3,554,900 **People in Stress**
Phase 1	4,473,000 **People in food security**

Overview

Sindh 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, and impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Around 2.3 million people (23 percent of the rural population analysed) are estimated to be in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) and Phase 4 (Emergency) in the current period (October 2021-March 2022), corresponding to the planting/lean season. These include around 1.7 million people (17 percent of the rural population) in IPC Phase 3 and around 0.63 million people (6 percent of the rural population) in IPC Phase 4 across the nine districts analysed. All districts have at least 5 percent of their population in IPC Phase 4, and except for Badin and Dadu, the other seven districts have between 20-30 percent of their populations in IPC Phase 3 or 4. Urgent action is therefore required to protect livelihoods and reduce food consumption gaps of people in Crisis and Emergency phases of acute food insecurity. Out of the nine analysed districts, seven districts, namely Jamshoro, Mirpur Khas, Sanghar, Sujawal, Tharparakar, Thatta and Umerkot are classified in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis), whereas Badin and Dadu are 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 reduce slightly to 2.2 million from 2.23 million (22 percent of the rural population). The area phase classification of all nine analysed districts remain unchanged; seven districts are classified in IPC Phase 3, while two districts are classified in IPC Phase 2, as in the current period.

The analyzed districts experienced multiple shocks that include drought and an increase in food and fuel prices associated with COVID-19 impacts, which resulted in poor food security outcomes for the current period. Although a slight improvement in the food security situation in the projection period is anticipated, due to the fact that this coincides with the harvest/planting season, when food stocks and livelihood opportunities are likely to improve slightly, food access will remain challenging because of continuously increasing food commodity prices throughout the year.

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 has 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

Almost all districts did not receive adequate rainfall and experienced moderate or severe drought conditions during the first half of 2021. Due to a deficiency of rainfall, farmers experienced difficulties and a reduction in crop and livestock production.

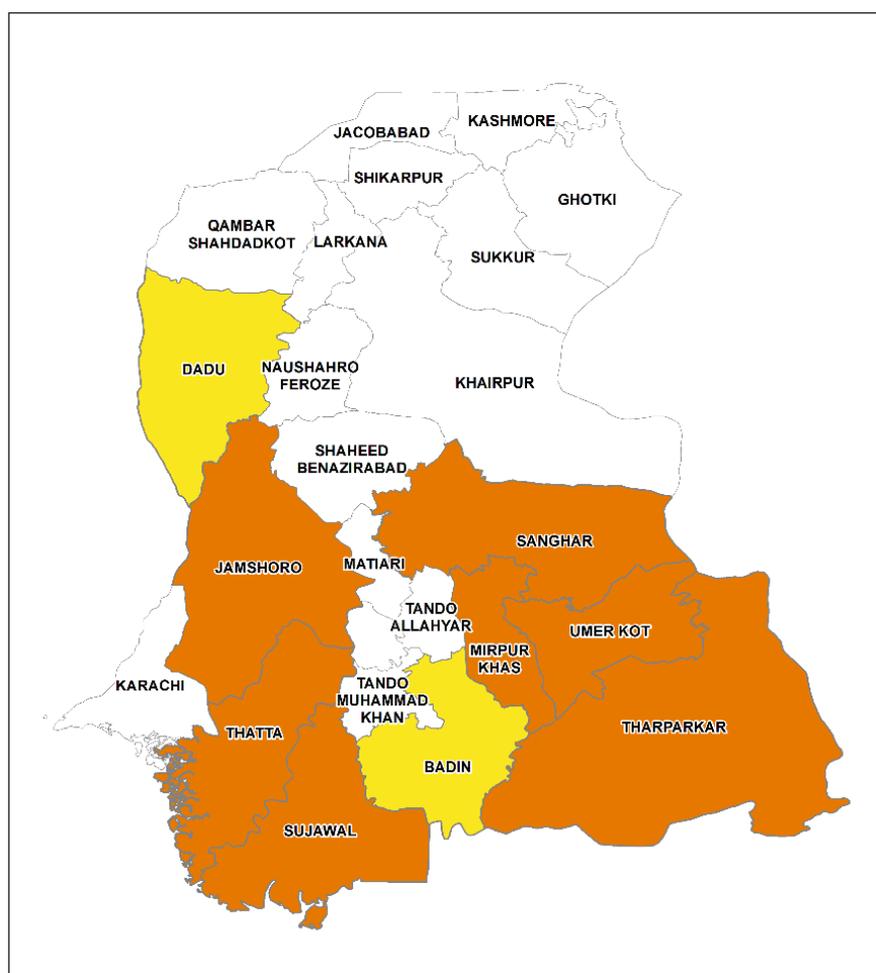### Current: October 2021 - March 2022   Projection: April - June 2022
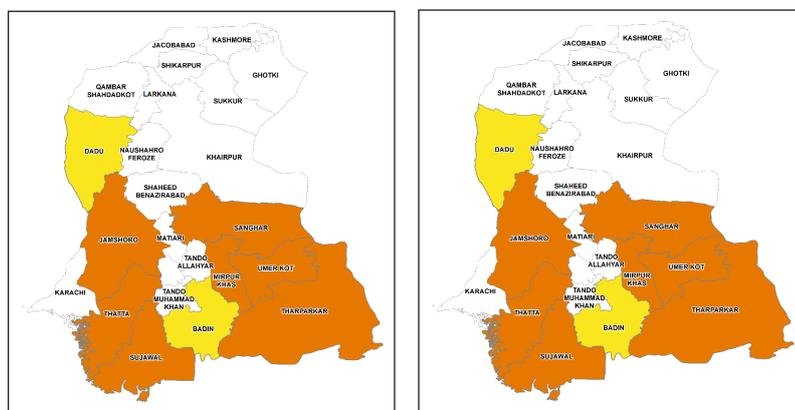
Key for the Map
IPC Acute Food Insecurity Phase Classification

1 - Minimal		5 - Famine	
2 - Stressed		Areas not analysed	
3 - Crisis		**Evidence Level**	
4 - Emergency		** Medium	

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
- Areas not analysed

Evidence Level
** Medium

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

District	Total rural population	Phase 1		Phase 2		Phase 3		Phase 4		Phase 5		Area Phase	Phase 3+	
		#people	%	#people	%	#people	%	#people	%	#people	%		#people	%
Badin	1,525,994	762,997	50	534,098	35	152,599	10	76,300	5	0	0	2	228,899	15
Dadu	1,222,213	611,107	50	427,775	35	122,221	10	61,111	5	0	0	2	183,332	15
Jamshoro	581,039	232,416	40	174,312	30	145,260	25	29,052	5	0	0	3	174,312	30
Mirpur khas	1,160,794	580,397	50	348,238	30	174,119	15	58,040	5	0	0	3	232,159	20
Sanghar	1,581,115	632,446	40	553,390	35	316,223	20	79,056	5	0	0	3	395,279	25
Sujawal	745,199	298,080	40	223,560	30	149,040	20	74,520	10	0	0	3	223,560	30
Tharparkar	1,657,346	662,938	40	497,204	30	331,469	20	165,735	10	0	0	3	497,204	30
Thatta	864,041	302,414	35	388,818	45	129,606	15	43,202	5	0	0	3	172,808	20
Umer kot	889,149	355,660	40	311,202	35	177,830	20	44,457	5	0	0	3	222,287	25
Total	10,226,890	4,438,454	43	3,458,597	34	1,698,368	17	631,472	6	0	0		2,329,839	23

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. 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 focused on the rural population of nine districts of Sindh province, namely, Badin, Dadu, Jamshoro, Mirpur Khas, Sanghar, Sujawal, Tharparkar, Thatta and Umerkot. Among these, Badin, Sujawal, Sanghar, Tharparkar and Umerkot districts border with India; Sanghar, Tharparkar and Umerkot have desert areas; Dadu, Thatta and Jamshoro also have rain-fed areas, whereas Thatta, Badin and Sujawal are also coastal districts. Overall, around 1.7 million people are in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) and around 0.63 million people are in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency). Furthermore, 4.4 million people are in IPC Phase 2 (Stressed). Seven districts are classified in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) and two districts in IPC Phase 2 (Stressed). Mirpur Khas, Sanghar, Thatta and Umerkot are the areas with 20-25 percent population in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) or above, while Jamshoro, Sujawal and Tharparakar have 30 percent of their population in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) or above.

Hazards and Vulnerabilities

Overall, around two thirds (64 percent) of the surveyed households reported agriculture and livestock-based activities, 21 percent reported non-agriculture wage labour, 12 percent reported self-employment/employment or owning a business in the non-agriculture sector, and 3 percent reported other sources (pension allowance, charity/zakat/gifts, and home-based work like handicraft), as their primary source of livelihood in the analysed districts during the household assessment.

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 Drought Alert issued in June 2021 by Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), severe drought conditions were prevailing in Badin, Mirpur Khas, Sanghar, Sujawal, Tharparakar, Thatta and Umerkot, whereas Dadu was under moderate drought conditions.

Other shocks such as sickness or death of a member/breadwinner, lost employment or income, and reduction in own production, were also reported by surveyed households in a household assessment conducted in July/August 2021[1]. Overall, more than two-thirds (65 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 lockdown/restrictions, 48 percent reported their household livelihood/income was severely affected by COVID-19, 46 percent reported it was moderately affected, and 6 percent reported it was slightly affected. Similarly, 30 percent of the surveyed households reported their household livelihood/income was severely affected by drought, 20 percent reported it was moderately affected, 5 percent reported it was slightly affected, while 45 percent reported it was not affected by drought. Furthermore, 37 percent of the surveyed households reported movement restrictions for goods resulted in impeding or delaying their ability to transport goods to market. Moreover, 31 percent reported they were affected by closure of food markets, 18 percent reported they were affected by the ban on social gatherings, and 9 percent were affected by closure of food processors (slaughterhouse/dairy cooperatives / restaurants, etc.).

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 no respondents reported owning up to one acre of land, 23 percent own between one and three acres, 30 percent own between three and five acres, 34 percent own more than five acres of agricultural land, while 12 percent of households do not own any agricultural land. In the case of land cultivation in Rabi 2020-21 season, 1 percent of households cultivated up to one acre of land, 35 percent cultivated between one and three acres, 26 percent between three and five acres, 22 percent more than five acres, and 16 percent did not cultivate 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 five months, with around 27 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 the major problem for households.

The overwhelming majority of farming households (58 percent) reported difficulties in crop production in the Rabi season 2020-21, such as plant diseases, poor seed quality, not enough irrigation/rain water, lack of access to fertilizer (not available on markets or prices too high), crops lost or damaged during the growing season, lack of access to seeds (not available on markets or prices too high), etc. Overall, 35 percent of farming households reported problems in selling

[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 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.

their crop produce, such as higher marketing costs (such as transportation) reported by 58 percent, prices too low by 48 percent, damages and losses due to delay or inability to physically access markets reported by 26 percent, usual traders or local customers not buying as much as usual by 26 percent and difficulty in processing products (lack of processing inputs/equipment etc.) by 6 percent of farming households[2]. Around 18 percent of the farming households reported a reduction in the planted area and nearly one-fourth (24 percent) reported a reduction in production of main crop of Rabi season 2020-21 due to multiple shocks compared to a normal year.

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 Badin, Thatta/Sujawal, and Dadu), millet (cultivated mainly in Tharparkar, Mirpur Khas, Umerkot, Badin and Sanghar), maize (mainly grown in Thatta/Sujawal, Sanghar, Jamshoro and Umerkot), sorghum (cultivated in Mirpur Khas, Sanghar, Jamshoro and Badin), and barley is mainly grown in Thatta/Sujawal, Badin and Jamshoro districts. Except for Tharparkar, all districts also produce different varieties of vegetables and fruits, whereas a major cash crop—cotton—is mainly grown in Sanghar, Mirpurkhas, Umerkot districts. Official data from the Crop Reporting Services (CRS) of Sindh Agriculture Department shows that wheat area (in hectares) has increased by 2 percent whereas wheat production (in tonnes) increased by 1 percent in the analysed districts during the past five years. Out of the nine districts analysed, Sanghar, Dadu and Mirpur Khas districts have relatively more production of wheat compared to the other districts. Sindh is self-sufficient in producing wheat (the staple cereal crop) and does not rely on the import of wheat from other provinces, mainly Punjab.

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 (92 percent) own livestock, and cattle, goats and poultry are the three most owned livestock, owned by 55 percent, 28 percent and 15 percent livestock holders respectively. About 40 percent of livestock holders who own livestock reported death of their main and second main livestock during the past six months preceding the household assessment, whereas 50 percent reported death of their third main livestock[3]. The three main reasons for death of livestock reported 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 56 percent of livestock holders, second by 55 percent and third by 34 percent. Among the households that sold livestock[4], 41 percent reported distress selling due to poor health of the animal, 35 percent reported distress selling to meet food and other needs, 20 percent reported distress selling due to limited availability of fodder, whereas 79 percent reported normal sale for earning livelihoods.

The overwhelming majority of livestock holders (60 percent) also reported difficulties in livestock production in the past three months preceding the assessment, and 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. In addition, 68 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 rain-fall in the areas. The livestock holders also reported difficulties in selling their livestock during the past three months preceding the assessment. Main difficulties reported are: prices too low (71 percent), higher marketing costs (such as transportation) reported by 40 percent, usual traders or local customers not buying as much as usual reported by 19 percent and damages and losses due to delay or inability to physically access markets (11 percent)[5].

Agricultural support required by farming households to improve crop and livestock production in the next three to six months includes cash assistance, good quality seeds, fertilizer, animal feed, restocking animals, loans, veterinary services, pesticides, veterinary inputs, access to irrigation water and tools.

According to the Seasonal Agro-Climate Outlook for 1st October 2021- 30th April 2022, issued by the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), "lower Sindh (where most of these districts are located) would receive 3-4 light to moderate rainfall spells. These rains will benefit the crop in providing good soil moisture in crop life cycle. Therefore, the rains in December till January 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". Further, as per monthly Outlook for October 2021 by the PMD, in Sindh Province, due to the persistent rains in previous months, drought conditions which were moderate to severe in June 2021 in these areas have become normal. However, the latest seasonal La Niña forecast suggests that for southwest Pakistan (where some of the analysed districts are located), drier than normal conditions are likely to occur between November 2021 and January 2022.

The above evidence suggests that though own production of food is not adequate for household consumption for long (just five months on average, for three months in Badin and Thatta and two months in Sujawal, while less than a month in Tharparkar), sufficient food is available in the markets.

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[2] Multiple response question.
[3] Death of one or more main, second or third main livestock during the past six months.
[4] Percentage of livestock holders who sold one or more livestock during the past six months.
[5] A 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 9 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 three major markets surrounding the analysed districts, on average, the price of wheat flour rose by 20 percent, rice by 4 percent, sugar by 11 percent, cooking oil /vegetable ghee by 29 percent, masoor by 27 percent, gram pulses by 11 percent, beef by 14 percent, mutton by 12 percent, milk by 6 percent, eggs by 1 percent, the price of chicken increased by 16 percent, whereas prices of moong and mash pulses reduced by 19 and 3 percent respectively.

The inadequate production of cereals at household level raises 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 (66 percent) of households travel more than 30 minutes to reach the food markets. Nearly all of the households (94 percent) reported that they face problems reaching the market such as damaged roads, unavailability of transport, high cost of transportation and long distance to markets.

Households have also contracted new debts to meet basic household needs during the past three months preceding the assessment. Overall, 56 percent of households accumulated new debts, mainly to: cover food needs, medical expenses and purchase of livestock /agricultural inputs. Considering the already limited household income in these areas, 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 evidence above indicates that access to food is a major issue in these areas, which contributes to the poor food security situation of households.

Utilization

Access to improved sources of water is present in more than 80 percent in the analysed districts, however, quality of water was not assessed. Around 57 percent of households easily access water from the main sources of drinking water. Around 36 percent of households reported they usually use flush toilets; 10 percent of households use dry pit latrines; 16 percent use open pits, 1 percent use a communal latrine and 37 percent of households reported open field defecation.

In the case of housing status of households, 45 percent live in non-cemented (Kaccha) houses, 19 percent live in semi-cemented homes (Semi Pakka), 25 percent in cemented (Pakka) houses and 11 percent in chhorna/wooden/thatch houses. Overall, 54 percent of households have access to electricity from a government source, 12 percent reported using solar/generator, and 34 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 Umerkot and Tharparkar district only, as both districts have desert area with limited production of staple cereals, vegetables and fruits. For other districts, availability was considered a minor or not a limiting factor. Access is considered a 'major' limiting factor for all districts. The major limiting factors in terms of accessibility are attributed to a number of factors such as: low income, higher share of food expenditure in total household expenditure, high cost of transportation, long distance to markets, reduction in income and rising food prices. Similarly, utilization is considered a 'major' limiting factor for Sanghar, Tharparkar and Umerkot districts.

The Outcome Indicators

The Food Consumption Score (FCS): Overall, around half (49 percent) of households have 'acceptable' food consumption, nearly 36 percent have 'borderline' food consumption and around 15 percent have 'poor' food consumption.

The Household Dietary Diversity Score (HDDS): Overall, around 77 percent of households consumed five or more food groups during the 24 hours before the reference period, 18 percent consumed between three and four food groups, while only 4 percent consumed two or less food groups.

The Reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI): Overall 10 percent of the households had a score greater than 19, 50 percent had a score of 4-18, whereas 39 percent had a score of 0-3. Households with an rCSI score 0f 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, 60 percent of households had a FIES score of less than -0.58 which corresponds to IPC Phase 1, 20 percent had a FIES score between -0.58 and 0.36 corresponding to IPC Phase 2, whereas another 20 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, 13 percent of households adopted 'emergency' livelihood coping strategies, 28 percent adopted 'crisis' coping strategies, 27 percent adopted 'stressed' coping strategies, whereas 31 percent of households did not adopt any coping strategy.

Humanitarian Food Assistance

In some districts, the Federal and Provincial Governments, 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.

INGOs such as SIF, ACF, HANDS and Welthunherhilfe (WHH) provided food assistance to 28,936 people in Badin, Mirpurkhas, Sanghar, Sujawal, Tharparkar, and Umerkot; cash assistance to 30,132 people in Badin, Jamshoro, Mirpurkhas, Sanghar, Sujawal, Thatta and Umerkot; crop inputs to 68,361 people in Tharparkar, Sujawal and Badin; and livestock inputs to 1,418 people in Mirpurkhas and Sujawal districts.

FAO supported 30,436 people with cash assistance in Tharparkar and Umerkot; 17,206 people were assisted with crop inputs in Jamshoro, Tharparkar, Thatta and Umerkot; and 57,834 people were assisted with livestock inputs in districts Badin, Mirpurkhas and Umerkot.

WFP, in collaboration with ACTED, SIF, HANDS, and RSWDO, provided cash assistance to 40,832 people in Badin, Jamshoro, Mirpurkhas, Sanghar and Umerkot districts.

The assistance was included in the current analysis as captured by the outcome indicators. However, due to the limited coverage in terms of population reached, assistance was not included in the maps in line with the IPC mapping protocols. For the projected period, HFA was not considered.

PROJECTED IPC ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY FOR APRIL - JUNE 2022
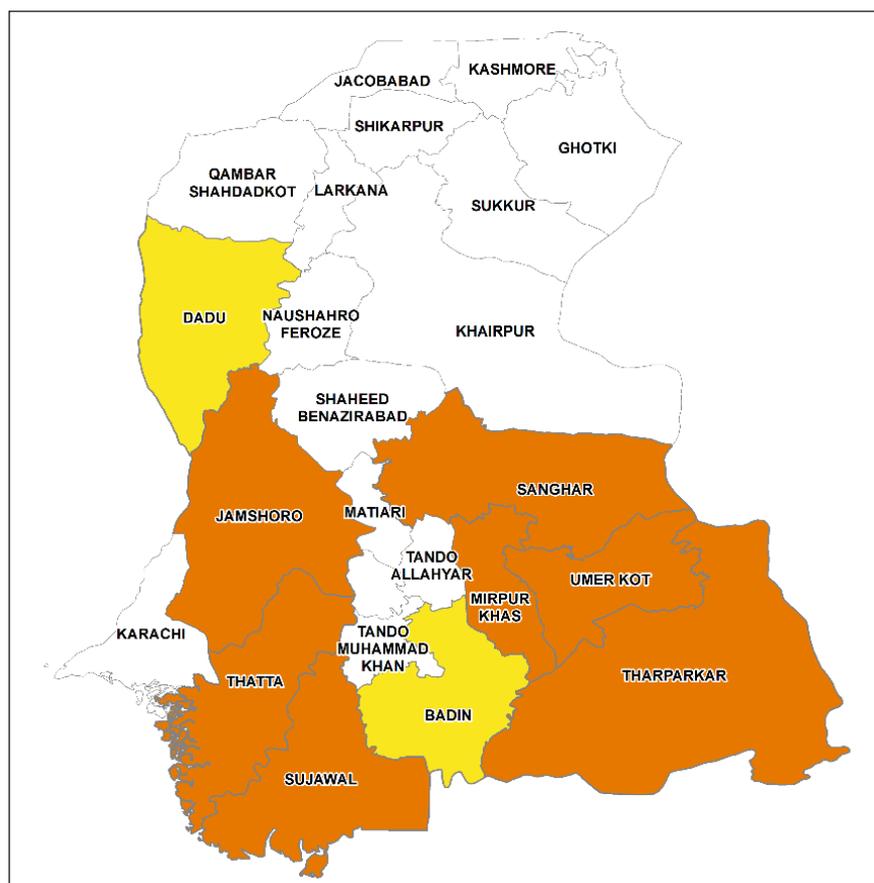
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- 4 - Emergency
- 5 - Famine
- Areas not analysed

Evidence Level
✳✳ Medium

Population table for the projected period (April - June 2022)

District	Total rural population	Phase 1		Phase 2		Phase 3		Phase 4		Phase 5		Area Phase	Phase 3+	
		#people	%	#people	%	#people	%	#people	%	#people	%		#people	%
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Total	10,226,890	4,472,982	44	3,554,878	35	1,628,670	16	570,361	6	0	0		2,199,031	22

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. 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.

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 reduce to 2.2 million from 2.3 million (22 percent of the analysed population). This shows a six percent reduction of people facing high levels of acute food insecurity from the current to the projection period. Out of the nine analysed districts, seven will remain in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) and two in IPC Phase 2 (Stressed). The slight reduction in numbers and severity is expected particularly in IPC Phase 4 and 3 because of improvement in food stocks, increased labour opportunities and normalization of drought conditions during the projection period.

Half of the analysed districts have desert or rain-fed regions and did not receive adequate and timely rainfall at critical stages of crop production, resulting in low production of cereals and vegetables. Food access is very much dependent on markets. Considering the current inflation trends and economic situation, factors such as rising food prices, high fuel and electricity costs would place further stress on 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 labourers, households relying on petty trade, etc., and might place further stress on food security of vulnerable households, resulting in food consumption gaps.

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

Labour opportunities are expected to increase slightly during the harvest and plantating period, contributing to food and income for the people associated with this wage sector. However, 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 increase in vaccination coverage, no major restrictions are expected during the projection period.

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 in Sindh in Sindh province - due to the persistent rains in previous months, drought conditions have become normal. The latest seasonal La Niña forecast suggests that for southwest Pakistan (where some 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.

- 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 planting and/or harvesting of crops during the projection period.

- Charity and remittances are expected to increase during Ramazan and Eid ul Fitar, which may increase the food consumption.

- The COVID-19 situation has improved and no further lockdowns or restrictions are expected.

Religious festivals and events such as Ramazan and Eid will be celebrated and observed during the projection period. That means 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.

Considering the above-mentioned factors, it's expected that 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), Peste des Petits Ruminates (PPR), and Hemorrhagic septicemia (HS) 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 reduction in number of people (130,800 or about 6 percent) facing Crisis and Emergency levels of food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 and 4) during the projection period.

COMPARISON WITH THE PREVIOUS IPC ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY ANALYSIS

The previous IPC Acute Food Insecurity (AFI) analysis was conducted in nine districts of Sindh in March 2021, of which five 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 27 percent of the rural population in the five districts that were also analysed in the October 2021 analysis (Badin, Mirpur Khas, Sanghar, Tharparkar and Umerkot) were experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) between March and June 2021. The projected prevalence between April and June 2022 for the same districts is estimated at 23%, indicating a slight improvement. This change may in part be due to the limited impact of COVID-19 anticipated in 2022, absence of major flooding events or desert locusts and other pests on crop production.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Response Priorities

This analysis shows a worsened food security 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 the food consumption gaps and to protect asset depletion for the populations classified in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) and Crisis (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 increase access to fodder, multi-nutritional feed and pastures to help in preventing distress sale. Livestock programmes should 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 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.

- 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 the 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 Sindh 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. It is also expected to erode their purchasing power, that needs to be monitored.

- Climatic conditions (drought): The climatic conditions are crucial to monitor, which may impact on agricultural production and livelihoods, and may also cause outbreaks of livestock diseases. Drought conditions were prevailing in eight out of the nine analysed districts and lack or limited rainfall in the analysed districts could 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 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), Peste des Petits Ruminates (PPR), and Hemorrhagic septicemia (HS) outbreaks are likely to increase due to seasonal change.

- Loss of employment: Economic instability, exchange rates, fuel prices and cost of production increasing may cause loss of employment and affect livelihoods.

- The COVID-19 situation: Although the incidence rate has been declining significantly in Pakistan, the situation still needs to be monitored because of a surge in cases globally due to the new variant.

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[6], along with other secondary information sources. The projected period (April-June 2022) analysis was based on the household assessment data, 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 Sindh, namely: Badin, Dadu, Jamshoro, Mirpur Khas, Sanghar, Sujawal, Tharparakar, Thatta and Umerkot.

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), the Fast Rural Development Program (FRDP), Taraqee Foundation (TF), the Foundation For Rural Development (FRD), and the 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 included 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[7]. 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 the Prevalence of Moderate and Severe Food Insecurity based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES);

- Crop production data from the CRS, Agriculture Department, Sindh;

- Food prices data from the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS);

- Projected population based on 2017 Population Census by the Sindh Bureau of Statistics;

- 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 the PMD.

The Evidence Level of this analysis is Medium.**

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[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.

Limitations of the Analysis and Recommendations for Future Analyses

- A limited number 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, 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.

Acknowledgements

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.

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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.

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