

Five countries selected for inclusion in the GRFC 2024 either had data gaps or data not meeting GRFC technical requirements in the region.

## The Democratic People's Republic of Korea

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has been selected for inclusion in all editions of the GRFC because it is monitored by FAO-GIEWS but has remained a data gap in the GRFC for the last seven years due to lack of information on acute food insecurity.

The government has not published statistics on food production since 2020 but according to Chinese Customs data, its total exports of cereals and fertilizer to the country were similar to the elevated levels of 2019 (General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China, December 2023).

The government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea reported that it met 103 percent of its food production target for 2023 (WPK Central Committee, December 2023). For 2024, the seasonal forecast suggests that rainfall and temperatures are expected to support the early-stage development of winter season crops. However, it is too early to forecast the weather from April until the main crop harvests later in 2024.

There is little verified data available on the public distribution system and food prices, nor on the availability of agricultural inputs like fertilizers, improved seeds, farming equipment, and energy.

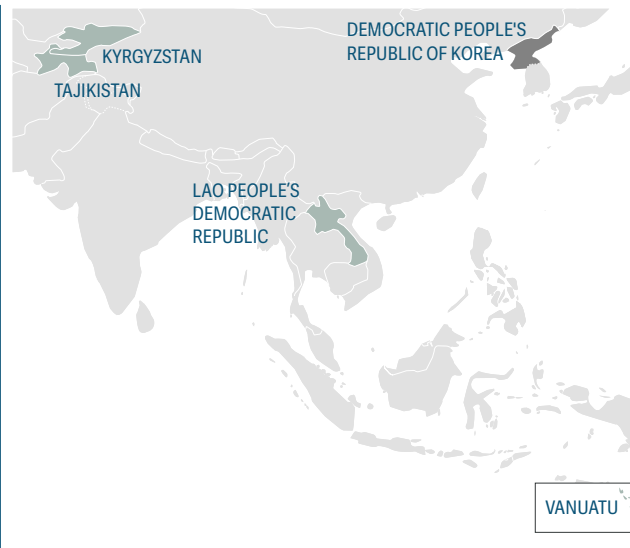
## Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyzstan has been selected for inclusion in all editions except the GRFC 2023. For this edition, it was selected based on a request for external assistance due to hostilities, but lacked data on acute food insecurity that met GRFC technical requirements. Persistently high inflation and growing rates of poverty have contributed to the erosion of resilience, adoption of negative coping strategies, and worsening nutritional status (WFP, August 2023).

The dry weather conditions have resulted in wheat and barley harvests that were 25 and 15 percent below average respectively (FAO, February 2024). The population is highly dependent on remittances that constitute 28 percent of GDP (WB, December 2022).

According to the latest census data, about 1 million people migrate for labour, of whom 89 percent work in the Russian Federation (IOM, February 2022). If the Russian economy deteriorates as a result of sanctions in 2024, there could be a return of Kyrgyz labour migrants, reduced trade and hindered growth (IMF, October 2023).

In August, flooding and mudflows damaged shelters and transportation infrastructure, and impacted the livelihoods vulnerable households (ICRC August 2023). Instances of violence along Kyrgyzstan's border regions decreased slightly in 2023 after a surge in 2022 (ACLED, February 2023).



## Lao People's Democratic Republic

The Lao People's Democratic Republic has been selected for inclusion in every edition of the GRFC since 2020 based on requests for external assistance, but the country did not have data that met GRFC technical requirements in 2023. Macroeconomic pressures diminished the purchasing power and savings of vulnerable populations, with the Lao currency continuing to slide against the US dollar in 2023 over concerns about the government's ability to meet debt obligations (FAO-GIEWS, August 2023). The country is vulnerable

to climate shocks based on high dependence on climate-sensitive natural resources (WFP January 2024). Dry spells linked to high temperatures in Vientiane and southern provinces in 2023 impacted rice paddy yields, and maize crops for the late 2023 harvest were below average (FAO-GIEWS, August 2023; USDA, February 2024). Following a surge in the cost of rice in 2022, food inflation reached a ten-year peak of 52.2 percent in May 2023. Average food inflation in 2023 was 39.5 percent in 2023 nearly double that of 2022 (FAO-GIEWS, August 2023; WFP, January 2024).

## Tajikistan

Tajikistan has been selected for inclusion in every edition of the GRFC since 2020 because of requests for external assistance, but available data have not met the GRFC technical requirements. Remittances, largely from the Russian Federation, make up a larger percentage of Tajikistan's GDP than any country in the world and despite steady growth in remittances over the last ten years, projected flows were expected to decline in 2023 contributing to a deceleration in GDP growth to

6.5 percent (World Bank, December 2022). Food expenditures were comprising an increasingly large proportion of household expenditures leading to an increase in negative coping strategies such as limiting portion sizes and borrowing food from friends and relatives (FAO/WFP, December 2023). Climatic conditions were conducive to strong harvests in 2023 with cereal outputs 22 percent above five-year averages (FAO-GIEWS, October 2023).

## Vanuatu

Vanuatu qualified for the 2017, 2021 and 2024 editions of the GRFC due to external assistance received in response to natural disasters, but it has always been a data gap due to lack of availability of acute food insecurity data that meets GRFC technical requirements.

In early March 2023, Category 4 cyclones Judy and Kevin struck in succession causing significant damage to housing, water and health infrastructure, agriculture and aquaculture. They impacted an estimated 250 000 people, about 75 percent of the total population. In March 2023, a 6.5 magnitude earthquake struck off the coast of Espiritu Santo Island (CID, November 2023). In October 2023, another Category 4 tropical cyclone Lola made landfall, affecting an estimated

150 000 people, about 45 percent of the population (IFRC, November 2023). By May–June, 46 percent of households were adopting crisis or emergency livelihood coping strategies, such as reducing health expenditures. Food prices were reported as a major concern by 41 percent of households (WFP, May 2023).

The Fiji Meteorological Service assumes an elevated risk of cyclones through the 2023/2024 season as well as reduced rainfall due to the El Niño event (IFRC, November 2023). The country is highly vulnerable to climate change and is facing rising ocean levels and a higher frequency and severity of natural disasters (WB, November 2021), which pose a challenge to government capacity to respond.