

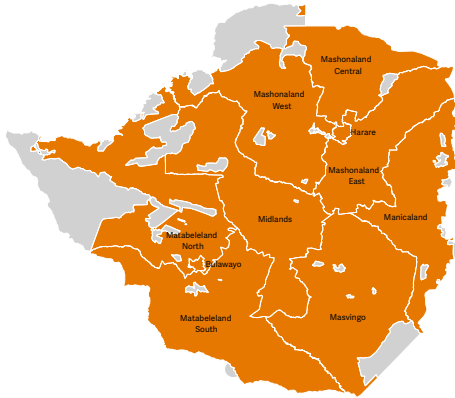
ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY | A worsening food crisis due to El Niño-induced drought coupled with macroeconomic instability.

PEAK 2024 (OCTOBER–DECEMBER)

 **5.0M** people or 32% of the total population faced high levels of acute food insecurity during the lean season.

This is a major deterioration since the 2023 peak when 3.5 million people faced high levels of acute food insecurity, mainly due to a very poor 2024 harvest.

Deficit-producing areas in the southern, eastern, western and extreme northern regions were of high concern, along with areas with a very poor harvest in Mashonaland provinces.



The Government of Zimbabwe did not support this analysis.
Source: FEWS NET, June 2024.


PROJECTION 2025 (JANUARY–MARCH)*

 Up to **6.0M**** people or 38% of the total population are projected to face high levels of acute food insecurity by the end of the lean season.

This marks a worsening situation from the end of 2024 up to the main harvest in April 2025. Household food stocks are expected to deplete early during the lean season, even in typical surplus-producing areas, while high prices and below-average income constrain access to markets.

* The projection period differs from the period defined as peak in 2024.
** This figure represents the upper bound of the 5–6 million range provided by FEWS NET.
Source: FEWS NET, October 2024.


DRIVERS OF THE FOOD CRISIS 2024–2025

 **Weather extremes** Due to El Niño, the 2023/24 rainy season was characterized by delayed onset and well below-average cumulative rainfall and multiple dry spells during a time that was critical for crop development (FAO, May 2024).

While these deficits were recorded throughout the country, the most extreme anomalies were in extreme northern areas. Parts of Mashonaland Central, Mashonaland West and Midlands provinces experienced the driest mid-January to March period on record (FEWS NET, October 2024).

Widespread drought-induced crop failures and low yields caused a 50 percent decline in the production of cereals compared with the five-year average (FAO, May 2024). A nationwide state of emergency was declared in April 2024 as a result of the drought.

Low rainfall amounts in November and December 2024 negatively impacted plantings and early crop development in key cereal-producing regions (FAO, March 2025). Starting in January 2025, rainfall improved due to La Niña, which is expected to boost 2025 crop prospects.

 **Economic shocks** Food prices were pushed higher throughout 2024 primarily due to monetary instability. The government introduced a new official currency (ZiG) in April 2024, which moderated inflationary pressures. However, the exchange rate continued to experience instability.

In September 2024, the widening gap between the official and parallel exchange rates led the government to devalue the ZiG by 40 percent vis-à-vis the US dollar (WFP, September 2024). This devaluation caused food prices to spike abruptly in October 2024, further complicating

the country's efforts to meet consumption needs (FAO/WFP, November 2024).

Production shortages due to the El Niño-induced drought also exacerbated food price inflation, as the country's cereal import needs nearly doubled for the 2024/25 marketing year (FAO-GIEWS, December 2024). The weak currency inflated import costs of cereals from South Africa, where wholesale white maize prices reached consecutive record highs in 2024.

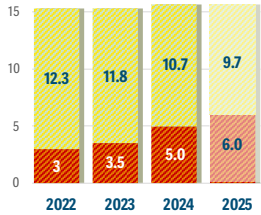
The reduction in crop production also reduced income from food and cash crop sales as well as food supplies, which further eroded vulnerable households' purchasing power and constrained their ability to access food.

DISPLACEMENT

 **22 400** refugees and asylum-seekers

Source: UNHCR Nowcasted estimate, December 2024.

Peak numbers of people (in millions) by phase of acute food insecurity, 2022–2025



Source: FEWS NET.

A protracted food crisis A lower-middle-income country, Zimbabwe has been in all editions of the GRFC due to weather extremes and macroeconomic instability.

The number of people facing high levels of acute food insecurity over the 2016–2021 period is not comparable with the 2022–2025 period because of differences in the assessment methodology. Over the 2022–2025 period, the magnitude of the crisis has steadily increased because of macroeconomic issues, hyperinflation and weather extremes.