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ChildFund
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Save the Children



SOS CHILDREN'S
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INTERNATIONAL

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World Vision

PRESSE RELEASE

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More than a quarter of people in the world's worst food crisis are living in West and Central Africa

Senegal, Dakar, 16 October - 58 million people¹ across West and Central Africa, including nearly 29 million children, are now acutely food insecure and in need of urgent food assistance, says an alliance of leading international NGOs in the region.

On World Food Day, the Joining Forces Alliance, including Save the Children, World Vision, SOS Children's village, Terre des Hommes, Educo, Plan International, have raised the alarm on the dire situation of food insecurity and hunger crisis in West and Central Africa.

Millions of households are now facing serious food shortages that greatly reduce their daily food consumption, which is leading to high or severe acute malnutrition and foodborne illness. Among them, 8 million people are currently experiencing severe food insecurity (IPC 4)² and could tip into famine, if urgent action isn't taken.

More than half of the households affected by this acute food insecure are in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Nigeria, while in the central Sahel, which includes Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, over 12.7 million³ people are affected. Nigeria remains among the countries of greatest global concern for the period of October 2022 to January 2023⁴ and for which immediate assistance is required.

Philippe Adapoe, Regional Director for Save the Children in West and Central Africa Region, said:

"2022 has been one of the most difficult years for children and their families in West and Central Africa, with this year's lean season has been one of the worst in 10 years. Those living in regions impacted by conflict have been the most affected. Malnutrition rates among children under five have soared. Enough is enough, it's time for concrete action to prevent a catastrophe from happening right before our eyes."

¹ [Up to 201 M people in IPC/CH Phase 3 or above or equivalent in 45 countries/territories with data in 2021 and new data available for 2022 and Hunger Hotspots FAO-WFP early warnings on acute food insecurity October 2022 to January 2023 Outlook, P16](#)

² The IPC Acute Food Insecurity scale categorizes acute food insecurity into five Phases of severity, ranging from IPC Phase 1, corresponding to No/Minimal acute food insecurity, to IPC Phase 5, corresponding to Catastrophe/Famine. IPC 3 corresponds to crisis. More details [here](#)

³ <https://www.wfp.org/publications/emergency-dashboard-central-sahel>

⁴ [Joint analysis – Global report on food crises](#)

The food security and nutritional status of the population and especially women and children has been severely compromised, and worsened by conflict, the long-term consequences of the restriction of activities due to the COVID- 19 pandemic, and now the constant rise of costs of basic foodstuffs, fuel and fertilizer. Conflict has left many families without access to their fields and has also resulted in a wave of internally displaced people in need. Added to this, the effects of climate change with floods damaging crops, or reduced production of cereals and vegetables due to less and scarce rainfall.

“I would like the government to lower food prices. Everything is expensive, the price of rice, fish and bread has increased. We barely have money to buy food supplies” Aminetou 11 Years old, Mauritania.*

Many families have told NGO staff they are no longer able to provide more than one meal a day for their children, and some even say that they cannot guarantee a single meal a day. These meals consist mostly of local products with poorly balanced diet which unfortunately do not provide the necessary energy and nutrients for the body.

Carla Denizard, Regional Leader for World Vision in West Africa, said:

“Children must be protected and that means responding quickly to the ongoing food crisis and taking preventive measures. With schools currently opening in most countries in the region, it is important to ensure that there is enough healthy food to allow children to be healthy and enjoy their right to go to school and stay there.”

The Joining Force Alliance calls on local decision makers and the international community to prioritize the Food Crisis in the West and Central Action and to take measures to:

- Strengthen national food security systems, increase equitable inclusive and child sensitive social protection systems and prioritize cash transfers to better support acutely food insecure families.
- Develop and expand nutrition-sensitive social protection programmes targeting households most at risk.
- Ensure most vulnerable children and their families have access to affordable nutritious food, adequate health services including the pregnant and lactating women as well as infants and children under 5.
- Maintain coverage of prevention and treatment programmes for acute malnutrition, particularly in hotspots identified by the household analysis.
- Strengthen the capacity of national actors to respond to climate shocks.
- Advocate for donors, decisions makers and national governments to commit for greater investment and anticipatory action to face food insecurity

Notes to editors

- Joining Forces is an alliance of the six largest international NGOs (ChildFund Alliance, Plan International, Save the Children International, SOS Children's Villages International, Terre des Hommes International Federation, and World Vision International) working for and with children under the age of 18 to realize their rights and end all violence against them.

For more information: <https://joining-forces.org/>

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