TIMOR-LESTE

Drought-like conditions, high food prices, landslides and floods caused by heavy rains are driving 360,000 people into acute food insecurity

IPC ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY ANALYSIS

NOVEMBER 2023 – SEPTEMBER 2024
Published on February 29, 2024

CURRENT ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY NOVEMBER 2023 - APRIL 2024

360,000
27% of the population analysed

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

IN NEED OF URGENT ACTION

Phase 5	0 People in Catastrophe
Phase 4	18,500 People in Emergency
Phase 3	341,500 People in Crisis
Phase 2	479,000 People Stressed
Phase 1	502,000 People in food security

PROJECTED ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY MAY - SEPTEMBER 2024

364,000
27% of the population analysed

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

IN NEED OF URGENT ACTION

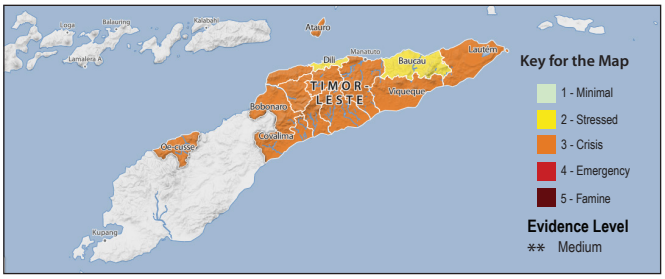
Phase 5	0 People in Catastrophe
Phase 4	22,000 People in Emergency
Phase 3	342,000 People in Crisis
Phase 2	494,000 People Stressed
Phase 1	483,000 People in food security

Overview

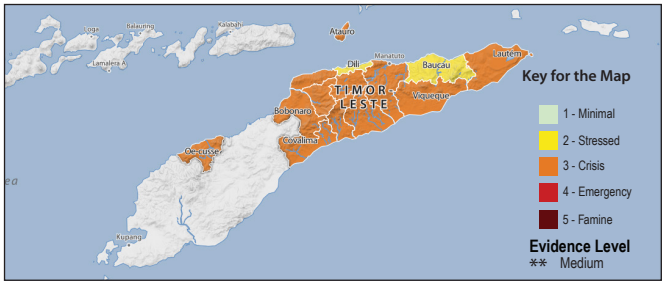
Timor-Leste is confronted by a worsening food security situation that demands urgent attention and action. In the current period of analysis (November 2023 – April 2024), corresponding to the lean season as well as a window of high-impact for El Niño, 27 percent of the total population (about 360,000 people) are estimated to be facing high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above), which includes 1 percent (about 19,000 people) classified in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency), and 26 percent (about 342,000 people) in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis). Urgent action is required to protect livelihoods, reduce food consumption gaps, and minimize the use of food-based and livelihood coping strategies for the 27 percent of the population in IPC Phase 3 and above. The main drivers of acute food insecurity are the drought-like conditions caused by El Niño, landslides and floods caused by heavy rains, and unaffordability of food exacerbated by poverty and steadily increasing prices of food.

During the projected period of analysis (May – September 2024), when the post-harvest season typically improves food security, a deterioration of food security is anticipated due to lower-than average rainfall received in the current period, as well as the highest inflation rates recorded in December 2023 (34 percent increase compared to December 2022) in the last ten years. Nation-wide food insecurity deepens, as there is a steady increase in the adoption of negative coping strategies, compounded by pre-existing poverty, successive climate shocks, and an expected reduction in agricultural production. In the projected period, it is estimated that 27 percent of the total population (about 364,000 people) will be facing high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 and above), with 2 percent (about 22,000 people) of the population analysed classified in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency), and 25 percent (about 342,000 people) classified in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis). The main factors contributing to this deterioration are the negative impacts of drought-like conditions which are expected to offset the positive effects of harvesting period in 2024; limiting food availability, agriculture-related employment opportunities, and household food reserves. The deterioration estimated in the projected period will depend on the impact of climatic shocks such as El Niño and La Niña weather events, as well as the rainfall received in different municipalities and the amount of water which reaches individual households. Moreover, access to food will continue to be an issue as prices overall have risen significantly compared to pre-pandemic levels due to supply chain disruptions, increased fuel prices, and the global reduction in rice harvest, among other factors.

Current situation: November 2023 – April 2024



Projected situation: May – September 2024



Key Drivers

Drought -Like conditions

Timor-Leste experiences periodic droughts, posing significant challenges to agriculture and water resources. The effects of droughts, often intensified by reduced food consumption, contribute to food insecurity, water scarcity, and economic challenges.

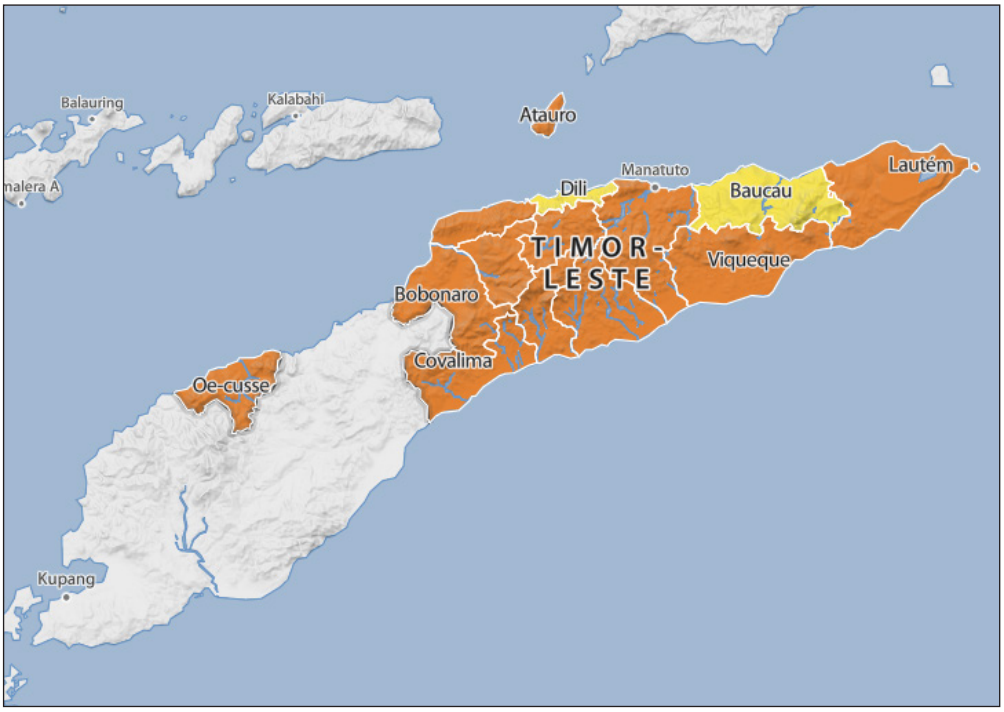
High Food Prices

Market disruptions, heavy reliance on imports, and the island's remoteness brings persistent challenges related to high food prices. Such factors lead to increased vulnerabilities in Timor-Leste's food supply chain, affecting accessibility and availability of food for its population.

Landslides and Floods

Heavy rains in Timor-Leste trigger landslides and floods, posing significant threats to communities and critical infrastructure. Such natural disasters exacerbate food insecurity, as they lead to loss of life and livestock, crop failures, and damage to critical infrastructure as well as private property. Disruptions in transport routes further limit the supply chain, access to markets, and availability of locally produced food items for the most vulnerable populations.

CURRENT IPC ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY SITUATION (NOVEMBER 2023 – APRIL 2024)



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 with inadequate evidence
- Areas not analysed

Evidence Level

** Medium

Population table for the current period: November 2023 – April 2024

Municipality	Total population analysed*	Phase 1		Phase 2		Phase 3		Phase 4		Phase 5		Area Phase	Phase 3+	
		#people	%	#people	%	#people	%	#people	%	#people	%		#people	%
Aileu	54,631	21,852	40	21,852	40	10,926	20	0	0	0	0	3	10,926	20
Ainaro	72,989	21,897	30	21,897	30	25,546	35	3,649	5	0	0	3	29,195	40
Atauro	10,302	4,121	40	2,576	25	3,606	35	0	0	0	0	3	3,606	35
Baucau	133,881	60,246	45	53,552	40	20,082	15	0	0	0	0	2	20,082	15
Bobonaro	106,543	26,636	25	47,944	45	31,963	30	0	0	0	0	3	31,963	30
Covalima	73,909	14,782	20	25,868	35	33,259	45	0	0	0	0	3	33,259	45
Dili	324,269	145,921	45	129,708	40	48,640	15	0	0	0	0	2	48,640	15
Ermera	138,080	20,712	15	48,328	35	62,136	45	6,904	5	0	0	3	69,040	50
Lautem	69,836	34,918	50	20,951	30	13,967	20	0	0	0	0	3	13,967	20
Liquiçá	83,689	20,922	25	33,476	40	29,291	35	0	0	0	0	3	29,291	35
Manatuto	50,989	22,945	45	15,297	30	12,747	25	0	0	0	0	3	12,747	25
Manufahi	60,536	18,161	30	21,188	35	21,188	35	0	0	0	0	3	21,188	35
Oe-cusse	80,726	44,399	55	16,145	20	16,145	20	4,036	5	0	0	3	20,181	25
Viqueque	80,054	44,030	55	20,014	25	12,008	15	4,003	5	0	0	3	16,011	20
Grand Total	**1,340,434**	**501,542**	**37**	**478,795**	**36**	**341,505**	**26**	**18,592**	**1**	**0**	**0**		**360,097**	**27**

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 thus, they may be in need of continued action. Marginal inconsistencies that may arise in the overall percentages of totals and grand totals are attributable to rounding.

CURRENT ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY SITUATION OVERVIEW AND KEY DRIVERS (NOVEMBER 2023 – APRIL 2024)

Current Situation Overview

Extreme climatic shocks, high food prices, and use of negative coping strategies are negatively contributing to the food security situation in Timor-Leste. In the current period of analysis (November 2023 – April 2024), 27 percent of the total population being analyzed (360,000 people) are facing high level of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 and above). Overall, out of Timor-Leste's fourteen municipalities, twelve (Aileu, Ainaro, Atauro, Bobonaro, Covalima, Ermera, Lautém, Liquiçá, Manatuto, Manufahi, Oe-cusse, and Viqueque) are identified as facing IPC Phase 3 (Crisis), with 5 percent of the population in Ainaro, Ermera, Oe-cusse, and Viqueque facing IPC Phase 4 (Emergency) conditions. This IPC analytical period is exceptional as it is in the same window where El Niño impact is forecasted to peak, leading to extreme dry conditions with insufficient and poorly distributed rainfall.

The current period finds that inadequate food consumption is present in 45 percent of households in Timor-Leste. The highest rates of poor and borderline Food Consumption Scores (FCS) are found in the municipalities of Covalima (69 percent) and Ermera (54 percent) followed closely by Lautém, Viqueque, and Aileu. High food prices are also aggravating the food insecurity of the population. December 2023 marked the highest Consumer Price Index (CPI) since 2013, at 124.7, showing an increase of 27 percent in ten years. This increase is particularly noticeable for the 'food and non-alcoholic beverages' group of the CPI, showing an increase of 34 percent in December 2023 compared against the same reference point. In addition, the cost of a minimum-required, nutrient-adequate diet has increased by 78 percent since 2019, with WFP's market monitoring identifying that the cost of local rice has increased by 12 percent since the last IPC Acute Food Insecurity analysis in 2023. This is also reflected in an increased use of food and livelihood-based coping strategies, which were particularly high in Ermera, Liquiçá, and Ainaro municipalities; indicating food-insecure households are also under heightened economic stress.

Poverty and economic vulnerability are underlying drivers of food insecurity. According to the latest Timor-Leste Survey of Living Standards (TL-SLS) in 2014, 42 percent of the population live under the national poverty line, with a minimum wage of USD 115 per month. The latest 2024 Food Security Assessment (FSA) further revealed that the four municipalities with percentage of populations in IPC Phase 4 situation also report the highest percentages of their population in the poorest wealth quintiles: Oe-cusse (65 percent), Covalima (59 percent), Ainaro (56 percent), and Viqueque (39 percent). Out of all municipalities, Viqueque is home to the highest percentage of elderly headed households in rural areas, at 19 percent. Economically vulnerable households are located in Covalima and Oe-cusse, which record the highest figures for household income decreases over the last 12 months (66 percent and 61 percent respectively); while Manufahi and Ainaro have the highest rates for households accruing debt (80 percent and 77 percent respectively). These measures of poverty strongly correlate to malnutrition, as these municipalities also have the highest GAM (Global Acute Malnutrition) rates.

Wealth showed a linear relationship with food and livelihood-based coping strategies. As household wealth increases, the likelihood of employing these strategies decreases. Use of negative coping was nonetheless still observed in the wealthiest quintiles. This correlation is found in municipalities with populations facing IPC Phase 4 outcomes, with some of the highest of livelihood (73 percent-91 percent) and food-based (73 percent-90 percent) coping strategies found in Ermera, and Ainaro. There are also troubling linkages between wealth, use of coping strategies, and the availability and affordability of a nutritious diet. Covalima (USD 13.91) and Ainaro (USD 10.47) reported some of the highest daily costs of a nutritious diet compared to the national average of USD 10.09, yet they have some of the highest rates of poverty. Of additional concern is Oe-cusse, where not enough food was available in the local markets during the survey period to calculate the cost.

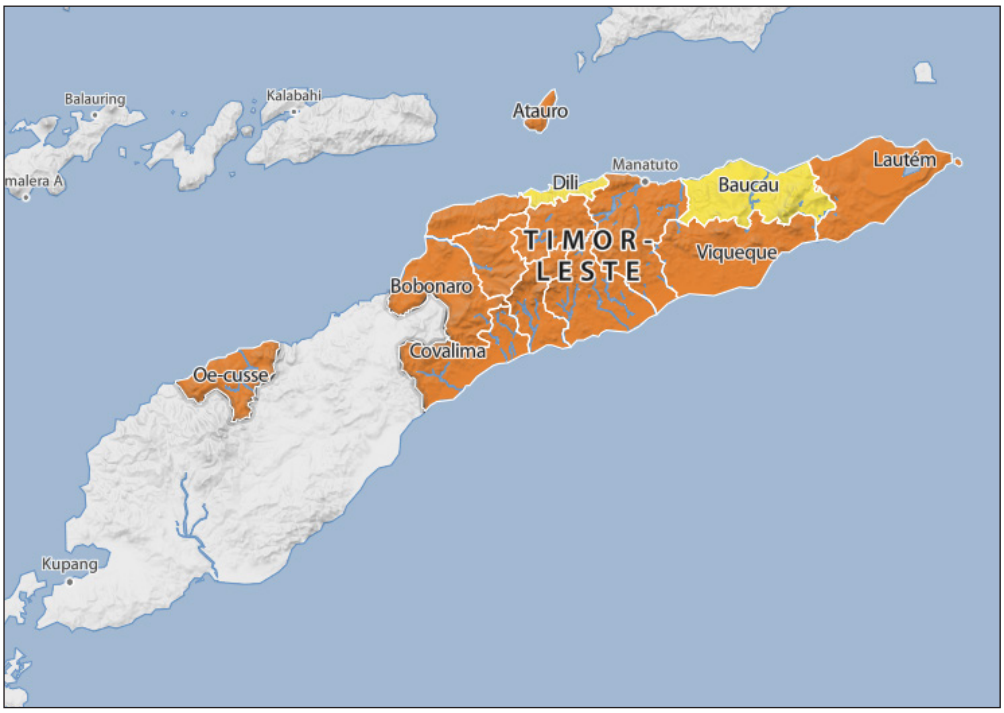
Municipalities with the highest use of Emergency and Crisis livelihood coping strategies were also most affected by multiple shocks in recent months. Ermera, Manufahi, and Ainaro, which reported among the highest figures for livelihood-based coping strategies (91 percent, 73 percent, and 73 percent respectively), were also significantly affected by two or more shocks in the last six months. This indicates the reduced capacity of vulnerable households to recover from consecutive shocks as the window of hardship extends. Exposure to multiple shocks in Ermera (32 percent), Ainaro (18 percent), and Manufahi (13 percent) are disproportionally high compared to other municipalities, with the next highest being Covalima (3 percent). The same municipalities also reported some of the highest rates of households using savings as a coping mechanism (65 percent-85 percent). Among the municipalities worst affected by multiple shocks, some of

the highest figures of household income decreases were also observed in Ermera (61 percent) and Manufahi (50 percent), demonstrating mounting financial burden of families exposed to multiple shocks who have little channels for recovery.

Amid rising food costs, municipalities with the highest costs of a nutritious diet per day were directly related to the highest percentages of households with debt. There is reduced affordability of rice overall for vulnerable populations. Local rice prices have been volatile and increasing – reaching the highest recorded price since 2020 at USD 1.88 per kg in November 2023. In turn, since 2022 the traditionally more affordable imported rice has also drastically increased by 15 percent. Since 2019, there has been a 78 percent increase in the average cost of the minimum required, nutrient-adequate diet from USD 5.68 per day to USD 10.09 per day, posing a threat to the minimum required daily food intake. The burden of increasing food prices is the most present in Covalima, Dili, and Baucau, which have the highest rates of debt accrual to obtain food. On a monthly basis, households need to spend over USD 300 per month to cover their basic nutrient needs, which is a significant jump from USD 170 in 2019, and more than double the national minimum wage of USD 115.

Access to water has been a long-standing challenge. Over one third of all households in Timor-Leste were found to lack an adequate water source consisting of piped water or a protected well connected to the house. The 2024 FSA reports that the two most cited consequences of drought conditions experienced in the 2015-2016 El Niño were: reduced crop production (31 percent), and reduced access to drinking water (14 percent). Ermera (24 percent), Dili (23 percent), and Atauro (20 percent) have reported the highest reduction in water access since the 2015-16 El Niño droughts; indicating a prolonged, limited supply of water for at least one out of four people in these municipalities. On average, approximately 10 percent of the respondents in the remaining municipalities have reported a reduced access to drinking water, with Baucau and Manatuto reporting the highest figures. The 2020 Timor-Leste Food and Nutrition Survey (TLFNS) data reports Oe-cusse (43 percent) and Viqueque (50 percent), two municipalities with an IPC Phase 4 population, and Covalima (43 percent) as the municipalities with the smallest percentage of populations with access to a public/standard water source.

PROJECTED IPC ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY SITUATION (MAY – SEPTEMBER 2024)



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Bobonaro	106,543	21,309	20	53,272	50	31,963	30	0	0	0	0	3	31,963	30
Covalima	73,909	11,086	15	29,564	40	29,564	40	3,695	5	0	0	3	33,259	45
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Lautem	69,836	27,934	40	24,443	35	13,967	20	3,492	5	0	0	3	17,459	25
Liquiçá	83,689	16,738	20	29,291	35	33,476	40	4,184	5	0	0	3	37,660	45
Manatuto	50,989	22,945	45	17,846	35	10,198	20	0	0	0	0	3	10,198	20
Manufahi	60,536	21,188	35	21,188	35	18,161	30	0	0	0	0	3	18,161	30
Oe-cusse	80,726	48,436	60	16,145	20	16,145	20	0	0	0	0	3	16,145	20
Viqueque	80,054	44,030	55	16,011	20	16,011	20	4,003	5	0	0	3	20,014	25
Grand Total	**1,340,434**	**482,638**	**36**	**493,798**	**37**	**341,719**	**25**	**22,278**	**2**	**0**	**0**		**363,997**	**27**

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PROJECTED ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY SITUATION OVERVIEW AND LIMITING FACTORS (MAY – SEPTEMBER 2024)

Projected Situation Overview

For Timor-Leste, in the projected period of analysis (May – September 2024), 27 percent of the total population (364,000 people) are projected to face high acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 and above). This includes a projected increase of the population facing IPC Phase 4 outcomes by almost 4,000 people. The anticipated decline of food security is concerning, as the projection period tends to coincide with the timeframe when food security improves due to harvest. Of further concern is approximately 19,000 people in six municipalities (Aileu, Baucau, Bobonaro, Covalima, Lautém, and Liquiçá) are projected to move from IPC Phase 1 to worse IPC Phase outcomes, indicating households that usually have the ability to cope with rising stressors will be unable to do so. It also indicates the fragility of the food security in the country, and the precariousness of vulnerable households to acute food insecurity in the face of compounding and successive shocks. A deterioration in food security is anticipated to be primarily driven by the negative impacts of El Niño on rice and maize production in 2024 both in the country and regionally, limiting food availability and increasing food prices, and impacting agriculture-related employment opportunities and household food reserves.

The seven municipalities which are anticipated to decline in food security outcomes (Aileu, Baucau, Bobonaro, Covalima, Lautém, Liquiçá, and Viqueque) are also most likely to be significantly affected by El Niño based on historical experience during El Niño in 2015/2016. Since 2015/2016, there has been limited recovery at the community and household levels as these municipalities are also most likely to have faced successive climatic and economic shocks. While state-led efforts continue to invest in improving the existing water systems in the past years, damaged water irrigation channels have not been fully reinstated to the point communities can access sufficient amounts of water at planting time. Also essential is the monitoring of the Fall Army Worm (FAW) infestation, which poses a threat in most municipalities for FAW's tendency to damage rice and maize, resulting in reduced yields. As strong drought conditions continue to sweep across the country, and with the onset of La Niña anticipated in 2024, the food security situation is expected to worsen in the coming months.

Assumptions

The following assumptions were made in the analysis for the projection period (May – September 2024).

1. El Niño conditions will persist until mid-2024, with La Niña conditions beginning almost concurrently without a transition period for recovery. There is a high likelihood of extreme dryness and heavy rainfall occurring within the same window in 2024.
2. Extreme climatic shocks will negatively affect yields in the current and projection periods, affecting planting and harvest seasons, as well as availability and economic access to food.
3. Food prices will remain high due to import dependency and low agricultural output both in Timor-Leste and Asian rice markets and considering that the Consumer Price Index (CPI) reached the highest figures in December 2023.
4. There will be a planned emergency response led by the Government and humanitarian and development partners, providing assistance to the most affected communities.

According to the national Combined Drought index (CDI), all municipalities as of November 2023 present drought-like conditions, meeting or surpassing the threshold of 60 percent. The December 2023 NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) Probabilistic ENSO Outlook forecasts that El Niño will persist until mid-2024 with La Niña to begin almost concurrently. From May to July, there is high likelihood of climate extremes with dryness and heavy rainfall occurring within the same window in 2024. El Niño will likely impact access to food and water, and lower production and seasonal incomes. In turn, the La Niña weather event is expected to bring landslides and floods caused by heavy rainfall, destroying critical infrastructure and farmland, which has historically led to physical access constraints and affecting the health of crops.

Given pre-existing acute food insecurity and compounding vulnerabilities in the country, even moderate El Niño or La Niña events can have outsized consequences on vulnerable households. Already, 44 percent of households nationally have experienced an income decrease in the last 12 months, leading vulnerable populations in the current period to resort to negative food and livelihood coping strategies to fill food consumption and income gaps. Food insecurity is anticipated to be further aggravated in the projected period for around 22,000 people facing IPC Phase 4 (Emergency) conditions in Ermera, Liquiçá, Viqueque, Covalima, and Lautém, as coping capacities steadily deplete following the same downward trend of the current period.

Timor-Leste scores "high" in lack of adaptative capacity for climate change, according to the 2023 Global Risk Index. The scenario presented in the projected period of analysis underpins the critical need for timely, strategic interventions and support mechanisms to address and pre-empt the strain on families and alleviate poor food security conditions. In 2024, the anticipated continued rise in the cost of food and fuel is poised to exert significant pressure on household incomes, particularly during the post-harvest season. The escalating costs create a challenging economic environment for households, as they grapple with reduced purchasing power, impending decline in seasonal incomes, and the use of savings and accrual of debt to cover essential needs. Currently, there are no indications that suggest these conditions will fundamentally change in the coming months.

In turn, the post-harvest season is traditionally a period of income generation that families depend on to sustain themselves between harvests. Lower agricultural production and increasing costs for food and inputs will effectively eliminate this income bridge, suggesting vulnerable families may lose a year of income in 2023/2024, which will impact household food consumption. Amid the price increases captured by the 2023 Cost of the Diet (CotD) analysis compared against 2019 values, the sharp price increase of imported rice began in Q2 2023 (15 percent increase year-on-year), following the same global trend throughout 2023. Additionally, prices of alternate staples, such as tubers and other cereals, have been higher and far more volatile in 2023 than in previous years.

According to the 2022 census data, Viqueque in particular has the largest rural populations aged 50 and over. It is projected to have 5 percent of the population facing IPC Phase 4, suggesting the distinct vulnerability of elderly populations. Effectively, one out of five people in the municipality will not have guarantees for livelihood opportunities, largely be unable to supplement income and food consumption gaps and require external assistance. According to the FSA, households in this municipality are also more likely to accrue debt, and be in the poorest wealth quintiles. This is anticipated to lead to a decline in food security amid soaring food prices. Baucau and Lautém, which also have high rates of the population facing IPC Phase 3 and above outcomes, have similar rates of the rural populations aged 50 and over, indicating a similar predicament of vulnerability and food insecurity.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Response Priorities

1. **Identification of Common Vulnerability Criteria:** Improve targeting assistance by identifying the demographic factors and drivers of vulnerability which are leading to food insecurity.
2. **Humanitarian Assistance:** Given 27 percent of the population are classified in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) or above, provide the humanitarian assistance to the most food insecure to mitigate their further deterioration in food security.
3. **Strengthened Social Protection Programs:** Strengthen and review targeted social protection programs to ensure vulnerable households receive sufficient and timely assistance.
4. **Improvements in Water Supply and Management:** As Timor-Leste's reduced adaptative capacity and water-scarcity have become persistent issues, invest in concrete improvements in water supply for all communities to ensure a reliable supply of clean drinking water and water for agricultural and household use.
5. **Scale-up of Climate-Smart Agriculture:** Prioritizing investments in climate-smart/ conservation agriculture techniques suitable for the Timorese context enhances farmers' resilience to both droughts and floods, as well as ensure local production even during hazardous periods.
6. **Strengthened Supply-Chain Systems:** Improve and enhance the processes, infrastructure, and coordination involved in the production, distribution, and delivery of food to communities.
7. **Anticipatory Action:** Approaches in Anticipatory Action taken to mitigate food insecurity at the national level, to minimize damage and losses.
8. **Joint Monitoring of Food Security and Climate Data:** Include indicators of food security and climate data in an integrated and robust early warning system, and continue monitoring in municipalities with populations experiencing multi-layered vulnerabilities and with the highest risk of food insecurity.
9. **Strengthened Collaboration Channels:** Strengthen and operationalize existing coordination platforms among the Government, humanitarian, and development actors to ensure a coordinated framework for prompt response.

PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY

Following the IPC Chronic Food Insecurity Analysis in 2018 and the first-ever IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis conducted in 2022 (published in February 2023), this was the second round of IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis for Timor-Leste. Since the country has two main seasons, rainy (lean season) or dry (post-harvest season), it was decided that the current period of analysis will include November 2023 to April 2024 to correspond with the lean season, and the projection period from May to September 2024 to correspond with post-harvest. The analysis was conducted with municipal-level data including all fourteen municipalities.

A three-day training workshop was held in Dili from November 23rd to 25th, led by the regional IPC coordinator with technical support from WFP analysts from Timor-Leste and Philippines country offices. The training was followed by a four-day analysis workshop from November 29th to December 2nd, which concluded on December 4th with a plenary session and an endorsement of the results provided by the Minister of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, and Forestry (MoALFF), with all 43 members of Technical Working Group (TWG) present from beginning to end. The training and analysis workshops were attended by participants from different UN organizations, Government ministries, and international and local NGOs who comprised the TWG. All available pieces of evidence for outcome and contributing factors of food insecurity were used for the food insecurity phase classification, adhering to the Global IPC protocols and v3.1 guidelines. The level of evidence for the analysis was assessed as Medium as per the IPC protocols. The analytical conclusions and recommendations were drawn from the inputs of the TWG, and all participants agreed on the final results.

Sources

The main data sources used for this analysis include:

- Food Security Assessment – World Food Programme (WFP, 2023)
- Cost of the Diet Analysis (MoALFF, WFP, 2023)
- Market price data (MoALFF, WFP, 2023)
- El Niño Food Security Alert (WFP, FAO, GoTL, October 2023)
- Timor-Leste Food and Nutrition Survey (MoH, WFP, FAO, UNICEF, et al, 2020)
- Timor-Leste Survey of Living Standards (MoF, INETL, World Bank, 2014)
- Annual rainfall and drought data – Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 2023)
- Agricultural Stress Index System (FAO, 2023)
- GIEWS Country Brief (FAO, 2023)
- Anomaly Hotspots of Agricultural Production – European Commission (EC, 2023)
- Production data – Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, and Forestry (MoALFF, 2023)
- Crop calendar – (MoALFF, 2023)
- Consumer Price Index (CPI) – National Institute of Statistics (INETL, 2023)
- Annual Report – Ministry of Health (MoH, 2022)
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Probabilistic ENSO Outlook (NOAA, December 2023)

Limitations of the analysis

The analysis was based on outcome indicators from the 2023 Food Security Assessment (FSA), the largest face-to-face survey on food security conducted in Timor-Leste, and other sources outlined above. The IPC analysts worked with the assumption that El Niño impacts are already being felt and ongoing, though drought was not officially declared in the country. Latest official data on malnutrition, water access, agricultural production, and household expenditures in Timor-Leste were not available during the exercise but could have contributed to analysis for the projection period.

In turn, official data on humanitarian assistance was also unavailable. The FSA included the percentage of households in each municipality receiving assistance in a three -month recall period, which was considered a mitigating factor for municipalities such as Oe-cusse, which reported the highest percentage (20 percent) of households receiving assistance.

This analysis anticipates a possible temporal incongruence regarding the administrative status of Atauro, which was initially a separate municipality in the 2023 IPC analysis. Although there have been ongoing discussions on inclusion of Atauro in the municipality of Dili, effectively reducing the total number of municipalities to thirteen from fourteen, this analysis treats Atauro as an independent municipality as its administrative status has not changed yet.

It was agreed that the fluidity of the situation in Timor-Leste given climatic variabilities and their impact warrant a review of the projection period and is foreseen to be undertaken by Q1 2024. This update will also benefit from data that was not yet available during the IPC analysis including on agricultural production, household expenditure, and nutrition, and to monitor the effect of any assistance programmes should they materialise. Overall, the next Timor-Leste Survey on Living Standards (TLSLS) planned for 2024 will be a welcomed addition to the next IPC analysis.

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 was conducted using the IPC protocols, which are developed and implemented worldwide by the IPC Global Partnership - Action Against Hunger, CARE, CILSS, EC-JRC, FAO, FEWS NET, Global Food Security Cluster, Global Nutrition Cluster, IFPRI, IGAD, Oxfam, SADC, Save the Children, SICA, UNDP, UNICEF, WFP, WHO and the World Bank.

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