



# BALOCHISTAN, PAKISTAN

**HIGH FOOD PRICES, LOCUST INFESTATION, FLASH FLOODS, DROUGHT AND REDUCED INCOME DUE TO COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS ARE DRIVING FOOD INSECURITY.**

## CURRENT MARCH - JUNE 2021

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## IPC ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY ANALYSIS MARCH - SEPTEMBER 2021 Issued April 2021

## PROJECTED JULY - SEPTEMBER 2021

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## Overview

Balochistan is one of the provinces with the highest prevalence of food insecurity, malnutrition and poverty in Pakistan. In 2020, the population faced multiple shocks including high food prices, locust outbreaks, rains/flooding and snowfall, all exacerbated by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Around 0.76 million people (27% of the rural population analysed) are estimated to be facing high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) in the current period (March-June 2021), corresponding to the end of the lean season and the beginning of the harvest season. These include around 0.57 million people (20% of the rural population) in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) and 0.19 million people (7% of the rural population) in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency) across the 10 districts analysed. All districts have at least 5% of their population in Phase 4, and between 20% to 35% in Phase 3 or 4. The analysis of the projection period (July-September 2021) corresponding to the post-harvest season indicates that the number of people in Crisis and Emergency phases is expected to reduce slightly to 0.73 million (25% of the rural population). Urgent action is therefore required to protect livelihoods and reduce food consumption gaps of people in Crisis and Emergency phases of acute food insecurity.

## Key Drivers



### High Food Prices

Nationally, food prices went up by 9.1 percent for rural consumers on a year-over-year basis in February 2021. High food prices of commodities and high inflation led to low purchasing power of households, particularly for low income groups e.g., small farmers, wage labors, households relying on petty trades etc.



### COVID-19

COVID-19 had an economic impact on income and purchasing power, due to limited income opportunities in agriculture and the non-agriculture sector.



### Drought

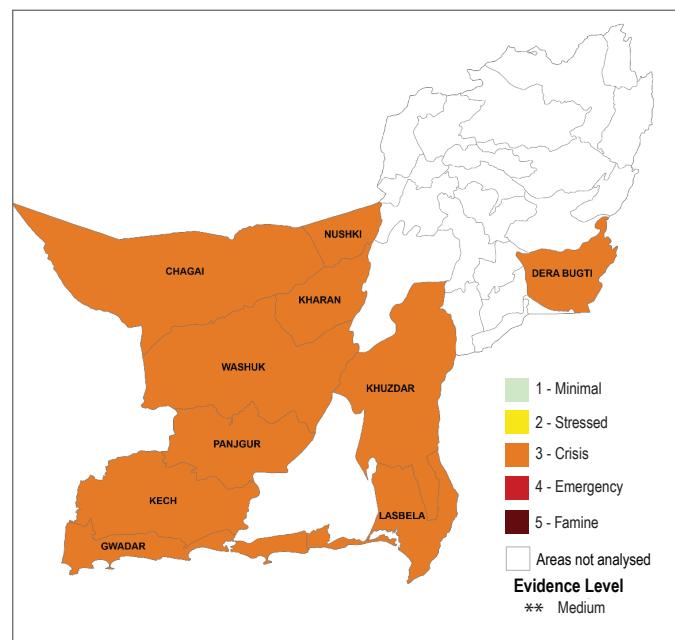
Most of the districts falling under arid-zones with high dependency on rainfall did not receive rainfall between April and November. Due to deficiency of pre-winter and winter rainfall, a moderate drought-like condition has emerged in southern and western parts of Balochistan.



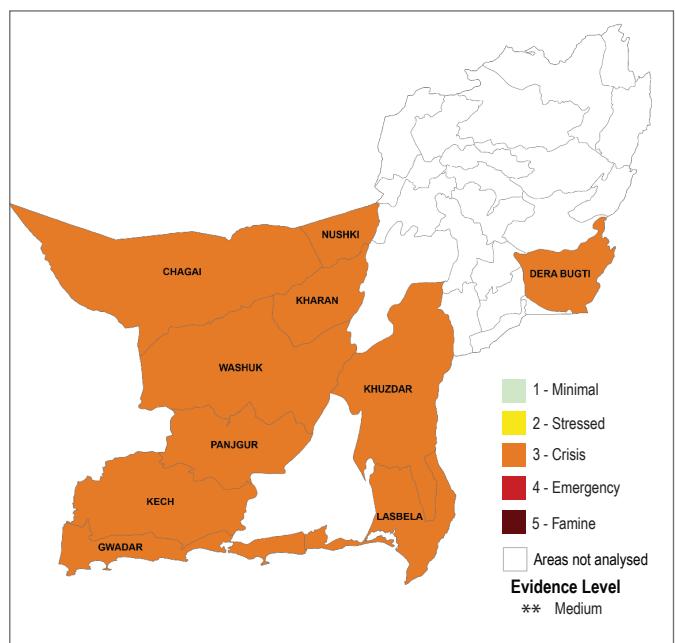
### Locust Infestation

Most of the districts are heavily reliant on agriculture where locust infestation was experienced, that adversely affected food crop and fodder production.

## Current Acute Food Insecurity (March-June 2021)

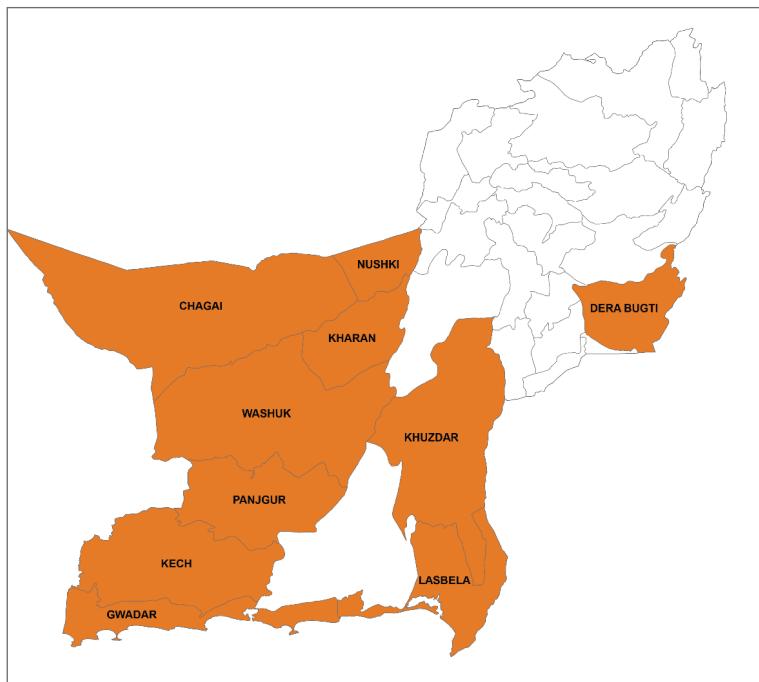


## Projected Acute Food Insecurity (July-September 2021)





## CURRENT SITUATION MAP AND POPULATION TABLE (MARCH - JUNE 2021)



### 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

District	Total population analysed	Phase 1		Phase 2		Phase 3		Phase 4		Phase 5		Area Phase	Phase 3+	
		#people	%	#people	%	#people	%	#people	%	#people	%		#people	%
Chagai	238,535	95,414	40	71,561	30	59,634	25	11,927	5	0	0	3	71,561	30
Dera Bugti	228,629	57,157	25	91,452	40	45,726	20	34,294	15	0	0	3	80,020	35
Gwadar	104,816	41,926	40	41,926	40	15,722	15	5,241	5	0	0	3	20,963	20
Kech	676,878	169,220	25	270,751	40	203,063	30	33,844	5	0	0	3	236,907	35
Kharan	120,210	30,053	25	54,095	45	24,042	20	12,021	10	0	0	3	36,063	30
Khuzdar	577,276	115,455	20	346,366	60	86,591	15	28,864	5	0	0	3	115,455	20
Lasbela	317,270	158,635	50	95,181	30	47,591	15	15,864	5	0	0	3	63,455	20
Nushki	145,110	65,300	45	50,789	35	14,511	10	14,511	10	0	0	3	29,022	20
Panjgur	242,781	84,973	35	97,112	40	48,556	20	12,139	5	0	0	3	60,695	25
Washuk	167,224	66,890	40	58,528	35	25,084	15	16,722	10	0	0	3	41,806	25
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2,818,729</b>	<b>885,022</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>1,177,760</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>570,520</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>185,427</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>755,947</b>	<b>27</b>

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.

# CURRENT SITUATION OVERVIEW KEY DRIVERS AND LIMITING FACTORS MARCH - JUNE 2021

## Vulnerability and Shocks

This IPC analysis is focused on ten rural districts of Balochistan province of Pakistan: Chagai, Dera Bugti, Gwadar, Kech, Kharan, Khuzdar, Lasbela, Nushki, Panjgur and Washuk. Both Nushki and Chagai districts border with Afghanistan; Chagai, Kech, Panjgur and Washuk border with Iran; Lasbela borders with Karachi; and Gwadar is a coastal district. Almost all analysed districts have desert areas and are prone to moderate to severe drought. Overall, around 580,000 people are in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) and around 190,000 people are in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency). Furthermore, 1.18 million people are in IPC Phase 2 (Stressed). All of the ten districts analysed are classified in IPC Phase 3. Chagai, Dera Bugti, Kech and Kharan have 30 percent or more of their population in IPC Phase 3 or above, while Panjgur and Washuk both have 25 percent of their population in IPC Phase 3 or above.

The main shocks affecting the areas have been locust outbreaks, flooding, high food prices and COVID-19 related restrictions affecting access to food and purchasing power. Very recently, drought-like conditions have also impacted food production and pastures.

The desert locust outbreak started from March/April 2019 in Balochistan and moved to other provinces (Sindh and Punjab) later in 2019 and early 2020. The analysed districts were also the most desert locust-affected districts in Balochistan. As per data on locust control and surveillance, out of 1,162,523 acres treated/sprayed in Balochistan, 868,138 acres (around 75%) were treated in the ten analysed districts. During August/September 2020, Dera Bugti, Gwadar, Khuzdar and Lasbela districts received heavy rains which caused flooding. Earlier in January 2020, Chagai, Washuk, Panjgur and Kech districts were affected by flash floods. The first case of COVID-19 in Pakistan was reported in February 2020 and the federal and provincial governments imposed a strict lockdown in the country from the last week of March 2020, with several businesses initially closed. However, considering the importance of keeping the food supply uninterrupted, food markets and some essential businesses were allowed to operate while other businesses remained closed. With an improvement in COVID-19 situation, the government lifted the restrictions on other businesses as well since May 2020, which continued for the rest of the year. From the third week of March 2021, the government has again announced limited business hours and two off days during the week due to the third wave of COVID-19, however, food and agriculture related businesses are largely exempted from these restrictions.

Multiple shocks affecting livelihood/income of the surveyed households were reported in the Food Security and Livelihood Assessment (FSLA<sup>1</sup>), mainly locust infestation, monsoon rains and COVID-19. The sickness or death of a member/breadwinner, lost employment or income and reduction in own production were other shocks reported by households. Overall, 53% of the surveyed households reported their household livelihood/income as severely affected by locusts, followed by 24 percent reporting moderately affected, 7% slightly affected and 16% not affected. In the case of impact of rains/flooding on household livelihood/income, 39% of the surveyed households reported it as severely affected, followed by 29% not affected, 20% moderately affected, and 12% slightly affected. Furthermore, 40% of the surveyed households reported their household livelihood/income as severely affected by COVID-19, followed by 26% moderately affected, 19% slightly affected, and 15% not affected. Overall 55% of the surveyed households reported a reduction in their income due to COVID-19 related lockdown/restrictions.

## Food Availability

Overall, agriculture and livestock-based activities have been reported as a primary source of livelihood by half (49%) of the surveyed households in the analysed districts during the FSLA, whereas non-agriculture wage labor as primary source of livelihood is reported by 21%, and other sources (small business/self-employed, medium to large business, government employee, NGO/private employee, petty trade, pension allowance, charity/zakat/gifts, and home-based work like handicraft) are reported by 30% of surveyed households.

## The Outcome Indicators

**Food Consumption Score (FCS)** - One-third have 'acceptable' food consumption, nearly half of the households (49%) have 'borderline' food consumption and around two-fifths (18%) have 'poor' food consumption. The households with borderline food consumption are at risk of deteriorating to poor food consumption if access to food worsens due to any unexpected shocks.

**Household Dietary Diversity Score (HDDS)** - 81% of households consumed five or more food groups during the past 24 hrs reference period, 12% consumed between three and four food groups, while only 7% consumed two or less food groups.

**Reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI)**  
– 12 % of the households had a score greater than 19, 40% had a score of 4-18, whereas 48% had a score of 0-3. Households with an rCSI score of 4-18 or 19+ indicates that food gaps exist in these areas and households are adopting short-term coping strategies to meet their food needs.

Households also resorted to **livelihood coping strategies (LCS)** to meet their food needs. Overall, 28% of households adopted 'Emergency' livelihood coping strategies, 16% adopted 'Crisis', 21% adopted 'Stressed', whereas 35 percent households did not adopt any coping strategy.

<sup>1</sup> FSLA was jointly conducted by FAO and WFP in 21 districts of Sindh, Balochistan and Punjab in collaboration with the Food Security and Agriculture Working Group (FSAWG) and the Provincial Disaster Management Authorities of Sindh, Balochistan and Punjab in October/November 2020.



Agriculture is one of the most important sources of livelihood for rural households in the analysed districts. Due to limited availability of water and landholdings and high dependence on rainfall, most farmers are engaged in small-scale subsistence-level crop production. Overall, in the analysed districts in Balochistan, on average, households own 4.4 acres of agricultural land, which is small, relative to the household size in the analysed districts and being rain fed, not enough to produce adequate food production for household consumption for longer duration. In terms of distribution of agricultural land ownership, the majority of the households (66%) do not own any agricultural land. The average land cultivation is 3.4 acres and most of the cultivators are sharecroppers or tenants. Overall, 63% of households do not cultivate land, 21% cultivate one to five acres, and 16% cultivate more than five acres. Due to small landholdings and subsistence-level crop production, on average, the households' production of 2020 Rabi and Kharif seasons' cereals is sufficient for household consumption for five months and less than one month respectively; suggesting limited or no carry over stock from previous seasons for the majority of households, particularly for the households who cultivate five acres of land or less and also have a large family size. The farming households also reported that COVID-19 related measures such as lockdown, restrictions on movement and limited business hours affected crop production due to limited availability of labor and agriculture machinery for harvesting/sowing of crops, seeds and fertilizers and high costs of seeds for crops, transportation and fuel. The farming households also reported problems in selling their crop produce due to COVID-19 related measures such as demand for crop produce is lower than usual, usual traders are not coming to buy the produce anymore, limited availability of transport for marketing of agriculture produce, cost of transportation is higher than usual, prices are too low, constrained access to markets due to movement restrictions, security, and other reasons.

The main cereal crops grown in the focused areas are: wheat (the major cereal crop grown in all areas in winter (Rabi season) except in Gwadar), rice (mainly grown in Kech and Khuzdar), millet (cultivated mainly in Dera Bugti and Gwadar) and maize (mainly grown in Dera Bugti, Khuzdar, Kharan, Lasbela and Panjgur). Except for Gwadar and Washuk, all districts also produce different varieties of vegetables, whereas major cash crop--cotton is mainly grown in Kech, Kharan, Khuzdar, Lasbela and Nushki, and sugarcane is grown in Dear Bugti, Lasbela and Washuk districts. Fruits such as grapes, apples, papaya and melons are also grown in some of these districts.

During the previous two cropping seasons, the farming households experienced adverse impacts of locust outbreaks and rains/flooding/snowfall in 2020, and their crops (both food and cash, vegetables and orchards) were affected. However, in 2021, another natural shock is looming in the form of drought in parts of Balochistan, including in most of the analysed districts. The FSLA highlighted that nearly all farming households had reductions in crop production due to multiple shocks compared to a normal year, affecting both staples (wheat, maize, rice and millet), fodder crops (rabi and kharif), cash crops (sugarcane and cotton) and others (cluster beans, vegetables and pulses). Overall, 89% of wheat growers, 71% of sugarcane growers, 99% of cotton growers, 89% of maize growers, 100% of rice growers, 100% of millet growers, 92% of sorghum growers, 94% of cluster beans growers, 93% of pulses growers, 97% of vegetables growers, 82% of Rabi season fodder crops growers, and 56% of Kharif season fodder crop growers reported a reduction in production compared to a normal year. Reduced fodder crops production also caused reduction in availability of fodder for livestock, which is the major livelihood source for the people in the affected areas. Agricultural support required by farming households to improve crop production in the next cropping season include good quality seeds, cash support to buy agriculture inputs, irrigation water, agricultural tools, fertilizer, improvement/repair of existing irrigation system and locust and pest control support, etc.

Official data from the Crop Reporting Services (CRS) of Balochistan Agriculture Department shows, that wheat area (in hectares) has increased by 37%, whereas wheat production (in tonnes) increased merely by 6% in the analysed districts during the past five years. Out of the ten districts analysed, Dera Bugti, Khuzdar and Lasbela have relatively more production of wheat compared to other districts. Importantly, Balochistan, including these districts, rely on the import of wheat from neighboring provinces (Punjab and Sindh) to meet its consumption needs.

Livestock is one of the core assets of rural households in the analysed areas and is kept as a source of livelihood as well as for meeting household consumption needs of livestock products. Overall, more than three-fourths (78%) of the households keep livestock (cattle, buffalos, goats, sheep, camels, donkeys and poultry), whereas more than 70% of the households raise livestock in all districts except in Nushki and Washuk. Up to 20% of livestock holders reported deaths of different types of animals except deaths of goats reported by 48% of livestock holders. The main reasons for the death of livestock were livestock diseases, rains/flooding and limited availability of fodder. Livestock holders also reported problems in selling/marketing livestock products due to the COVID-19 crisis because of increased transportation cost, road closure/lockdown, instructions to close milk farms and reduced demand for livestock products.



## Food Access

Pakistan is also facing high inflation, including high food prices. The current wave of inflation in the country is likely to have adverse effects 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) by the National Statistical Organization in March 2021 shows, that CPI inflation (General) in Pakistan increased by 8.7% on a year-over-year basis in February 2021. Food prices went up by 10.3% for urban consumers and 9.1% for rural consumers. In particular, prices of essential food items, such as wheat flour, rice, pulses, cooking oil and vegetables, have spiked since January 2020. In the two major markets surrounding the analysed districts, on average, price of wheat rose by 26% since January 2020, wheat flour by 7%, rice by 11%, sugar by 21%, cooking oil / vegetable ghee by 27%, masoor and moong pulses by 8% each, mash pulse by 4%, gram pulse by -8%, beef by 16%, mutton by 24%, milk by 10%, eggs by 17%, whereas price of chicken increased by 34%.

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 the high level of poverty in these areas, and the distance to food markets is relatively far, with nearly one-third of households travelling more than 10 kilometers to reach the market. Nearly two-thirds of the households (68%) reported that they face problems reaching the market such as long distances, access roads damaged, high cost of transportation, transport is often not available, security issues, etc. About two in five (39%) households reported that they do not have enough means/resources to buy food from the market.

The households have also contracted new debts to meet basic household needs during the six months preceding the FSLA. Overall, around half (43%) of households accumulated new debts, mainly to: cover food needs, purchase livestock/agricultural inputs and health needs. Considering the already limited household income in the area, people are likely to remain in a debt cycle for some time, as their monthly income is not enough to cover debt or payments.

## Food Utilization

Access to improved sources of water is 80% in the analysed districts, however, quality of water was not assessed in the FSLA. Around 21% of households reported men and women usually use flush toilets; in 54% of households, men and women both use dry pit latrine; whereas 20% and 17% of households reported open field defecation by men and women respectively.

In case of housing status of households, 67% live in non-cemented (Kaccha) houses, followed by 13% living in semi-cemented homes (Semi Pakka), 10% in cemented (Pakka) houses and 8% living in chhorna/wooden/thatch houses. The average number of rooms in the house is three, while, overall, 70% of households have 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 Chagai, Dera Bugti, Kharan, Khuzdar, Lasbela, Nushki, and Washuk districts. Access is considered a 'major' limiting factor for all ten analysed districts. The major limiting factors in term of accessibility are attributed to a number of factors such as: low income, higher share of income spent on food expenditure, inadequate availability of food commodities, very limited sufficiency of cereal crops, high cost of transportation, long distance to markets, reduction in income and rising food prices. Similarly, utilization is considered a 'major' limiting factor for Kech and Khuzdar districts. For the rest of the eight areas, utilization was considered a minor limiting factor. The major limiting factors are defined as less availability of clean drinking water and limited access to improved sanitation.

## 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 2020. Apart from FAO and WFP, NGOs such as Azat Foundation, Taraqee Foundation, Islamic Relief, BRSP, Youth Organization, TKF, etc. are also implementing interventions in some of the analysed districts.

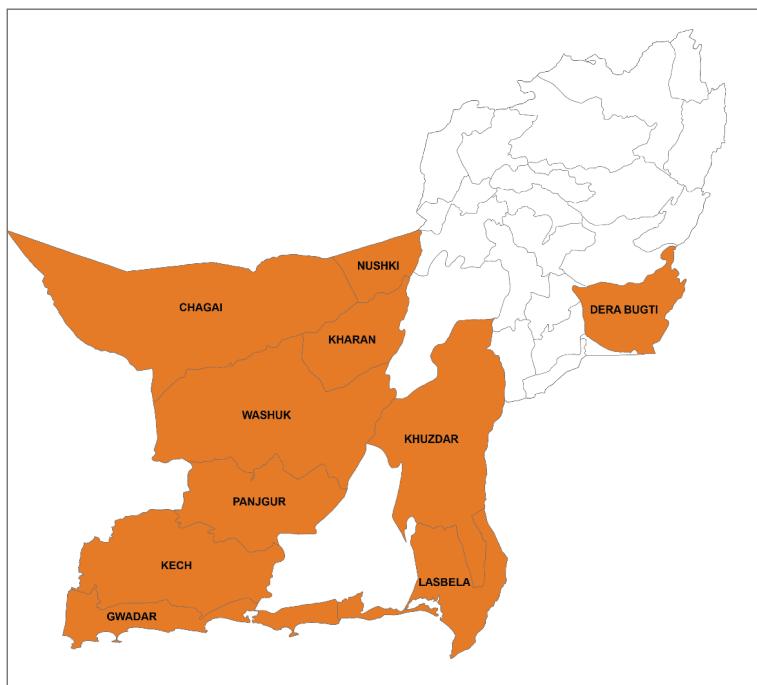
FAO provided livelihood related support in the form of crops and livestock inputs, cash/voucher assistance to 13,349 households in eight out of 10 analysed districts in 2020.

WFP, in collaboration with Taraqee Foundation, provided construction/rehabilitation of agriculture related infrastructure support to 18,930 families in Chagai, and to 16,045 families in collaboration with Azat Foundation in Washuk in 2020.

**The assistance was included in the current analysis as captured by the outcome indicators, however, due to missing information regarding the Kcal coverage, it was not possible to include it in the mapping protocols.**



## PROJECTED SITUATION MAP AND POPULATION TABLE (JULY - SEPTEMBER 2021)



### Key for the Map IPC Acute Food Insecurity Phase Classification

(mapped Phase represents highest severity affecting at least 20% of the population)

- 1 - Minimal
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#### Evidence Level

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<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2,818,729</b>	<b>1,003,986</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>1,086,134</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>574,406</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>154,202</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>728,608</b>	<b>25</b>

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.

## PROJECTED SITUATION OVERVIEW (JULY - SEPTEMBER 2021)

During the projection period (July to September 2021), corresponding to the post-harvest season, the total population facing high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) is expected to decrease to 0.73 million from 0.76 million (25 percent of the analysed population). This shows a 4% decrease of people facing high levels of acute food insecurity from the current to the projection period. Out of the ten districts, all districts will remain classified in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis). The slight decrease in numbers and severity is expected particularly in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency), because of the wheat harvest, stability in food prices and comparatively decreased impact of COVID-19 during the time of analysis.

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

Labor opportunities are expected to increase slightly during the harvest and post-harvest period contributing to the food and income for the people associated with the wage sector. However, with recent drought alert, if situation got worst there might be adverse impact on agriculture, livestock and wage labors.

Considering the rising number of COVID-19 cases and possibility of lockdown by the government, COVID-19 may also have a slightly adverse impact on the livelihood / income of the rural households over a shorter period of time. However, it is less likely that a complete lockdown will be imposed for a long time which can highly disrupt the food supply chain.

Food prices of commodities are expected to slightly decrease or stabilise following the harvest, though are expected to remain above long term averages. Inflation is likely to continue, which is expected to result in low purchasing power of households, particularly for low income groups. e.g., small farmers, wage labors, households relying on petty trades, etc., ending up with food consumption gaps.

Religious festivals and events, such as Eid ul Adha and Moharram, will be celebrated and observed during the projection period. Livestock sales are expected to rise around Eid-ul-Adha, which will take place in July 2021.

Due to climate change, rainfall unpredictability has become higher. According to the Drought Advisory issued in February 2021 by the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), "Pakistan overall received below normal (-31%) rainfall between October 2020 and January 2021). The main thrust was in Balochistan (-73.2%) and Sindh (-70.2%)". Mild to moderate drought conditions were prevailing in seven analysed districts (Chagai, Gwadar, Kech, Kharan, Nushki, Panjgur and Washuk). However, as per the recent Drought Alert issued in April 2021 by the PMD, moderate drought conditions are prevailing for those seven analyzed districts instead of mild to moderate. Further, as per the most recent seasonal Agro-Climate Outlook for April-September 2021, issued in April 2021 by the PMD, "Central Balochistan would receive a few spells of light rainfall mainly during the 2nd fortnight of April and during the first and third week of May. Here, in this area, the wheat crop is harvested earlier and the next crops would be at their initial stages. Therefore, these rains may be favorable for the standing crops. Whereas, North-Eastern Balochistan may receive 3-4 spells of light to moderate rainfall particularly from mid-April till the end of May, and then restarting during the first and third week of July and mid-September. At this particular time, normally, the wheat crop is at shooting to heading stages". Among the analysed districts, Dera Bugti is in North-East Balochistan and Khuzdar is in Central Balochistan, whereas the remaining districts are in West to South-West Balochistan.

Considering the above forecasts of the PMD, moderate to severe drought conditions are more likely to prevail in most of the analysed districts during the projection period, which would put stress on the households reliant on agriculture and livestock based livelihoods because of reduced production of crops and fodder and water availability. Livestock diseases also typically occur during June-August, which could also increase due to drought and have adverse impacts on the health, production and sale of livestock.

Considering the above-mentioned factors, very little improvement in the food security situation is anticipated during the projection period, due to some opportunities for agriculture and non-agriculture based livelihoods and market-related activities. However, rising inflation and drought are likely to offset the positive effects as rising prices are expected to reduce the purchasing power and income of already vulnerable households and drought will have an adverse impact on agriculture and livestock based livelihoods. Furthermore, households' production of wheat, other cereals and pulses are not expected to meet adequate household consumption. Therefore, a slight improvement is expected as shown in the numbers and classification above, though the majority of households will likely remain dependent on markets to access food during the projection period and may continue to face the same situation. Overall, there is no change in phase classification of the areas during the projection period (July-September 2021) as compared to the current period.

### Key Assumptions for the projected period

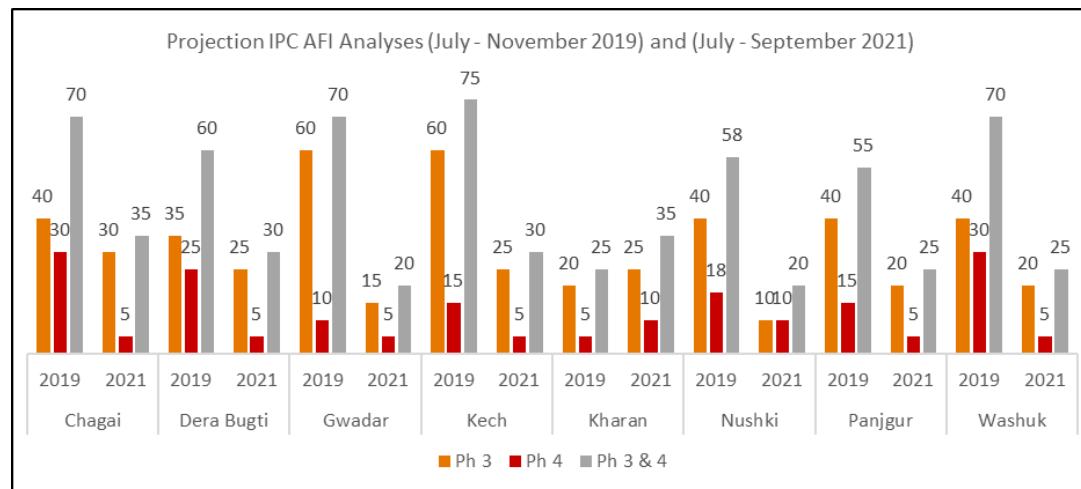
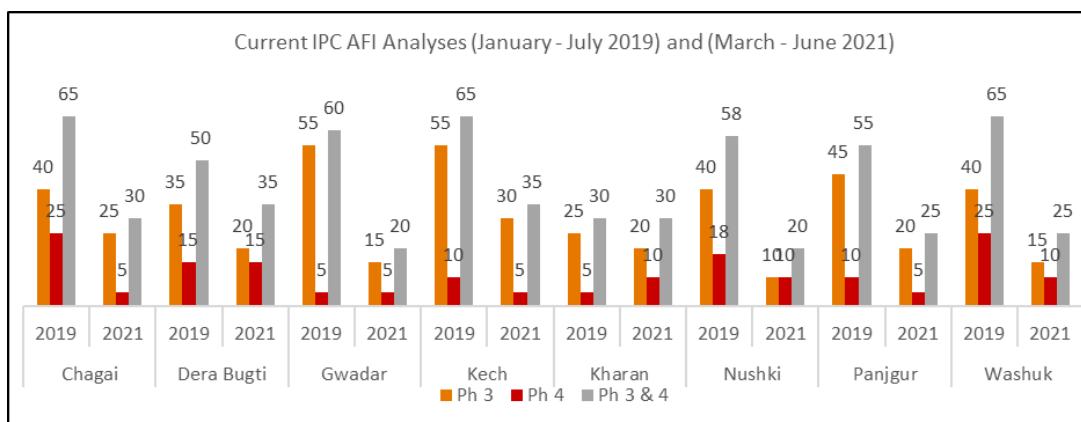
- The **COVID-19 pandemic** and its effects on health, livelihood and food security of households is expected to reduce with the availability of vaccine and increased awareness.
- **Food stocks** are expected to improve slightly because of the harvest.
- **Climatic conditions** (drought) - as per April 2021 drought alert by the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), moderate drought conditions are prevailing in 7 out of 10 analysed districts.
- The **Eid-ul Adha festival** may benefit livestock holders in the month of July because of the significant increase in the demand for livestock.
- **Livestock diseases** may increase due to changed climatic conditions (drought).
- **Livelihood opportunities** for farming households are expected to increase slightly due to planting and/or harvesting of crops during the projection period.
- Increasing **food prices** trend is expected to decrease or stabilise but remain higher in comparison with the long term average.
- **Low purchasing power** is expected to continue for rural households because of the lingering effect of COVID-19 and high food prices.
- **Humanitarian Food Assistance** is expected to continue at the same levels included in the current analysis.

## COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY ANALYSES

Several districts in Balochistan have been experiencing drought since 2016. In this context, the Natural Disasters Consortium (NDC)<sup>2</sup> conducted the Balochistan Drought Needs Assessment (BDNA) in fourteen drought-affected districts of Balochistan in January 2019. Using the NDC assessment data and other secondary information, the IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis focusing on drought-affected population in the fourteen notified districts in Balochistan (Awaran, Chagai, Dera Bugti, Gwadar, Jhal Magsi, Kachhi (Bolan), Kech, Kharan, Killa Abdullah, Loralai, Nushki, Panjgur, Pishin and Washuk) was conducted in April 2019. Out of the fourteen districts analysed, eight districts (Chagai, Dera Bugti, Gwadar, Kech, Kharan, Nushki, Panjgur and Washuk) are also analysed in this IPC analysis.

In comparison with the 2021 analysis, the 2019 results show a much higher prevalence of population in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis), owing particularly to the effects of prolonged drought on food access and availability in 2019. The below graphs show that food insecurity is still high in the analysed rural districts of Balochistan, however, the situation improved substantially compared to the 2019 analysis for both IPC Phases 3 (Crisis) and 4 (Emergency). Chagai and Washuk were classified in IPC Phase 4 while another six districts namely Dera Bugti, Gwadar, Kech, Kharan, Nushki and Panjgur were classified in IPC Phase 3 during the current period, while Chagai, Dera Bugti and Washuk were classified in IPC Phase 4 and the remaining five districts in IPC Phase 3 in the projection period in 2019. During the 2021 analysis, all eight districts are classified in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) during both current and projection periods.

Major livelihoods of the rural population of these districts are heavily agriculture and livestock-based with many of them reliant on livestock rearing. Their livelihoods were severely affected by prolonged drought since 2016, resulting in low food/cereal and livestock production subsequently making a large number of people food insecure. Agro-climate conditions and livelihoods improved between 2019 and 2020 with good rainfall that brought improvement in the food security situation, though this improvement has been partially offset by COVID-19, rains/flooding/snow fall, locust infestation and rising food prices in 2020 and mild to moderate drought conditions in early 2021.



<sup>2</sup> NDC comprised of IOM, FAO, UNICEF, HANDS and ACTED. WFP, OCHA and WHO also provided technical support to complete the assessments.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

### Response Priorities

This analysis shows a worsened food insecurity situation in the analysed districts due to exposure to multiple shocks experienced during 2020. In response to the populations in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) and IPC Phase 4 (Emergency) 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 cash and voucher assistance aimed at reducing the food consumption gaps 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.
- Scale up livestock protection and management interventions such as vaccination and deworming campaigns to prevent diseases and access to fodder, multi-nutritional feed and pastures can help in preventing distress sale. Livestock programmes should target the vulnerable households and women farmers.
- Construction and rehabilitation of water infrastructure for agriculture and livestock such as tube-wells, water channels and reservoirs for better conservation and management. Resilient water infrastructure can help in reducing the impact of recurring floods and droughts.
- Support livelihood diversification activities (including training on 'online business opportunities and management') for local communities to increase income-generation and employment opportunities.

### Situation Monitoring and Update

- The food security situation in the analysed areas need 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 to multiple shocks.
- Regular monitoring of food security and livelihoods could be done through seasonal household assessments such as the Food Security and Livelihood Assessment (FSLA).
- As drought conditions are aggravating in most of the analysed and surrounding districts, an FSLA in the context of drought in the second/third quarter and an IPC analysis should be carried out regularly to monitor the food security and livelihood situation in these areas and other vulnerable districts of Balochistan.
- If macroeconomic trends and the COVID-19 situation 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.
- It is recommended to conduct regular or seasonal IPC Acute Food Insecurity analyses to inform policy makers on the food security situation in these vulnerable areas of Balochistan. The IPC Acute Food Insecurity analysis and data collection should be harmonised and planned in a way that the findings can feed into HNO/HRP.

### Risk Factors to Monitor

- Climatic conditions (La Nina and drought) - the climatic conditions are crucial to monitor, which may impact on agricultural production and livelihoods, and may also cause outbreaks of livestock diseases. The drought conditions are prevailing in seven out of the ten analysed districts and lack of or limited rainfall in the analysed districts would push down the water table and also cause reduction in the growth of fodder leading to starvation of animals. Dry conditions will also cause water stress in the cultivated lands/areas due to limited supply of irrigation water for Kharif crops. If the moderate drought condition turns to severe in the coming months then the situation may deteriorate significantly and an update may be required.
- Prices of essential food items - prices of food items have registered a substantial rise during 2020, which also contributed to overall inflation, and needs to be monitored.
- The COVID-19 situation - it has recently worsened in the entire country and if the situation further worsens, the government may opt for lockdown in the coming months, which would affect the households associated with or dependent on unsustainable livelihood sources i.e. casual labour and other off-farm sources.
- Crop pests and diseases and livestock diseases - as these can potentially affect crops and livestock in already affected districts resulting in reduced production and increase in distress sale of livestock.



## PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY

The IPC Acute Food Insecurity analysis was conducted for two time periods: the current period (March-June 2021) analysis was mainly based on the Food Security and Livelihood Assessment (FSLA) data conducted in October/November 2020<sup>3</sup> along with other secondary information sources. The projected period (July-September 2021) was based on the FSLA, other secondary information sources and forward-looking assumptions on rainfall, drought, food prices, crop harvests, the COVID-19 situation and livelihood opportunities. The analysis covered the ten districts of Balochistan, namely: Chagai, Dera Bugti, Gwadar, Kech, Kharan, Khuzdar, Lasbela, Nushki, Panjgur and Washuk.

A joint training and analysis (hybrid) workshop was held from 8-12 March 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 Pakistan Agriculture Research Council, 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 (PDMA) of Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Agriculture and Livestock Departments of Sindh and Balochistan, Food Department of Balochistan, UN Organizations (FAO, WFP, UNICEF), and International and National NGOs (including: WHH, Concern Worldwide, ACTED, Care International, Action Against Hunger, Secours Islamique France, Islamic Relief, HANDS, TRDP, Youth Organization and 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 includes food security contributing factors and outcome indicators. The data was collected from multiple sources listed below and analysis was conducted in ISS.

### Sources

Data sources used for this analysis included:

- The Food Security and Livelihood Assessment (CFSLA) was carried out in 21 districts of Sindh, Balochistan and Punjab in October/November 2020. The FSLA 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 Reduced Coping Strategy index (rCSI) and Livelihood Coping Strategies (LCS);
- Crop production data from the CRS, Agriculture Department, Balochistan;
- Food prices data from PBS;
- Food and cash assistance, agriculture support, livelihood support/other distribution from the PDMA, INGOs;
- Precipitation/rainfall, drought alerts and Seasonal Agro-Climate Outlook from the PMD;
- Poverty incidence from UNDP/Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives.

**The Evidence Level of this analysis is Medium \*\*.**

### Limitations of the Analysis and Recommendation for Future Analyses

- A limited number of evidence informing the projection was available, with weather forecast still quite probabilistic.
- Humanitarian Food Assistance (HFA) data was not provided in the format allowing to extrapolate Kilo-calories coverage.
- The Livelihood Coping Strategies module presented an additional stress coping strategy. For this reason, the reliability of these indicators were downgraded during the analysis.
- The FSLA and the IPC analysis have covered only rural areas of ten districts. As such, the results should not be extrapolated or generalised as representative of the whole population in the area, but only of rural households.

<sup>3</sup> The FSLA was jointly conducted by FAO and WFP in 21 districts of Sindh, Balochistan and Punjab in collaboration with Food Security and Agriculture Working Group (FSAWG) and Provincial Disaster Management Authorities of Sindh, Balochistan and Punjab in October/November 2020.



## Acknowledgements

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## 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.

## Acute Food Insecurity Phase name and description

Phase 1 None/Minimal	Phase 2 Stressed	Phase 3 Crisis	Phase 4 Emergency	Phase 5 Catastrophe/ Famine
Households are able to meet essential food and non-food needs without engaging in atypical and unsustainable strategies to access food and income.	Households have minimally adequate food consumption but are unable to afford some essential non-food expenditures without engaging in stress-coping strategies.	Households either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have food consumption gaps that are reflected by high or above-usual acute malnutrition;</li> <li><b>or</b></li> <li>• are marginally able to meet minimum food needs but only by depleting essential livelihood assets or through crisis-coping strategies.</li> </ul>	Households either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have large food consumption gaps that are reflected in very high acute malnutrition and excess mortality;</li> <li><b>or</b></li> <li>• are able to mitigate large food consumption gaps but only by employing emergency livelihood strategies and asset liquidation</li> </ul>	Households have an extreme lack of food and/or other basic needs even after full employment of coping strategies. Starvation, death, destitution and extremely critical acute malnutrition levels are evident. For famine classification, area needs to have extreme critical levels of acute malnutrition and mortality)

## 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, FEWSNET, Global Food Security Cluster, Global Nutrition Cluster, IGAD, Oxfam, PROGRESAN-SICA, SADC, Save the Children, UNICEF and WFP.

## IPC Analysis Partners: