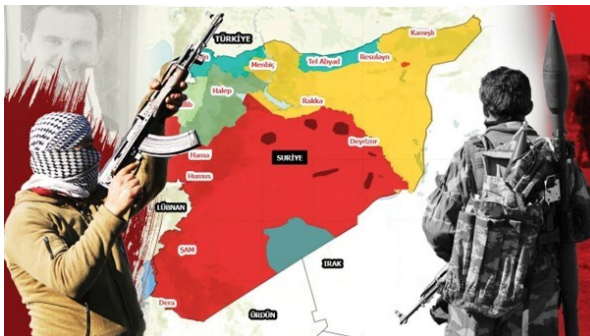


Water and Geopolitics

On 11 July, the United Nations General Assembly officially adopted six thematic areas for the 2026 United Nations Water Conference. These six themes - water for people, prosperity, the planet, cooperation, multilateral processes and investments - are divided into as many sub-themes.

These areas cover a very broad spectrum, built on the 2023 Water Conference. The diverse populations in the world need to be aware, understand and contribute to making water a sustainable good for each and every one of us. To achieve this, the water community, as well as economic and political decision-makers, researchers and scientists, must make it their duty to clarify the debate on access to water for everyone.

We must first clarify the threats to water resources. The climate, of course, but also demographics and galloping urbanization are causing water-related disasters, floods, droughts and pollutions and changing geopolitics .



Water has always been closely linked to geopolitics.

Changing geopolitics significantly affects transboundary water resources—water bodies shared by two or more countries. As geopolitical power shifts—through rising regional powers, alliances, or military conflicts—the balance in water negotiations can change

Geopolitical tensions can worsen water disputes, especially when water scarcity intensifies and states prioritize national interest.

Transboundary water shortages, intensified by geopolitical instability or war, can lead to mass migration or displacement, pressuring neighboring countries and creating cross-border humanitarian challenges.

Geopolitical changes in the Middle East can have profound effects on hydropolitics—the political aspects of shared water resources. This region, already arid and water-stressed, has several transboundary rivers and aquifers that are highly sensitive to shifting political dynamics.

Dursun Yıldız

Director

Global Drought Crisis Worsens, UN Report Warns of “Slow-Moving Catastrophe”



July 3, 2025 by [ESGNEWS Team](#)

A UN-backed report paints a grim picture of escalating drought conditions worldwide, with extreme dryness that began in 2023 continuing into 2025, pushing millions to the brink of hunger, displacement, and economic collapse.

The report, “*Drought Hotspots Around the World 2023-2025*,” highlights the compounding effects of drought on poverty, hunger, energy insecurity, and ecosystem health.

“Drought is a silent killer. It creeps in, drains resources, and devastates lives in slow motion. Its scars run deep,” said **Ibrahim Thiaw**, UNCCD Executive Secretary, commenting on the report. He added, “Drought is no longer a distant threat. It is here, escalating, and demands urgent global cooperation. When energy, food, and water all go at once, societies start to unravel. That’s the new normal we need to be ready for.”

The report, prepared by the US National Drought Mitigation Center (NDMC) and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) with support from the International Drought Resilience Alliance (IDRA), underscores the unprecedented scale of the crisis.

Dr. Mark Svoboda, co-author of the report and Director of the NDMC, described the situation as dire: “This is not a dry spell. This is a slow-moving global catastrophe, the worst I’ve ever seen. This report underscores the need for systematic monitoring of how drought affects lives, livelihoods, and the health of the ecosystems that we all depend on.” He said, “The Mediterranean countries represent canaries in the coal mine for all modern economies. The struggles experienced by Spain, Morocco and Türkiye to secure water, food, and energy under persistent [drought](#) offer a preview of water futures under unchecked global warming. No country, regardless of wealth or capacity, can afford to be complacent.”

Driven by record-breaking temperatures, with 2023 and 2024 confir-



med by NOAA as the two hottest years globally and July 22, 2024, marking Earth’s hottest day ever recorded, and prolonged precipitation shortages, regions across Africa, Asia, and parts of the Americas have been devastated. Sub-Saharan Africa, in particular, is grappling with severe food insecurity, malnutrition, and widespread displacement, with an estimated 43,000 excess deaths in Somalia in 2022 alone attributed to the drought.

The report also reveals that rural agricultural communities, especially those reliant on subsistence farming, have been hit hardest, with widespread crop failures, livestock deaths, and disruptions to essential services. Socioeconomic factors like income inequality, limited infrastructure, and political instability have further exacerbated the impacts.

Elena Tovar, a humanitarian policy analyst with the International Crisis Network, highlighted systemic weaknesses: “These droughts are revealing deep weaknesses in how the world prepares for and responds to climate shocks. Without urgent investment in drought resilience, early warning systems, and climate adaptation, these events will only become more deadly.”

As the world grapples with the ongoing consequences of the 2023-2025 drought, calls for



urgent global cooperation, robust resilience planning, and equitable climate policies are intensifying to prevent future disasters.

Source : <https://www.esgnews.earth/latest-news/global-drought-crisis-worsens-un-report-warns-of-slow-moving-catastrophe/13846.html>

Global Report on Food Crises 2025

09 June 2025

According to the 2025 edition of the Global Report on Food Crises (GRFC), over 295 million people experienced acute hunger last year, marking the sixth year in a row of rising food insecurity.

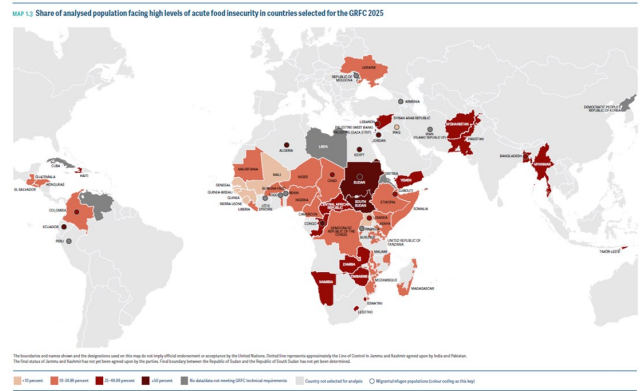


The GRFC 2025, launched on 16 May, finds that conflict and other crises are driving hunger to unprecedented levels. Displacement is also on the rise, as violence and natural disasters force people from their homes, leaving many people vulnerable to malnutrition and death. At the same time, climate extremes are becoming more severe, disrupting global food security by damaging harvests and breaking supply chains.

The GRFC is produced annually by the Food Security Information Network, which includes the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), World Bank, and World Food Programme (WFP).

The main purpose of the GRFC is to provide consensus-based analysis of countries/ territories with food crises and nutrition crises for humanitarian and development stakeholders and policy-makers.

Explore the interactive report and download resources [here](#).





Key findings

This is the sixth consecutive annual increase. An additional 13.7 million people faced high levels of acute food insecurity since 2023, corresponding to a marginal shift in prevalence from 21.5 percent.

Fewer countries were selected for the GRFC 2025, but expanded analysis coverage in some identified areas of high levels of acute food insecurity. Twelve did not have data meeting GRFC technical requirements.

Deteriorating acute food insecurity in 19 countries, mainly in conflict-driven crises such as Nigeria, the Sudan and Myanmar, outweighed improvements in 15 others, including Afghanistan, Kenya and Ukraine, due to better economic and weather conditions as well as assistance.

The total number of people facing Catastrophe (IPC/CH Phase 5) more than doubled between 2023 and 2024, driven by conflict. Over 95 percent of them were in Palestine (Gaza Strip) and the Sudan. South Sudan, Haiti and Mali also had populations in this phase.

Over 35.1 million people in 36 countries/ territories faced Emergency (IPC/CH Phase 4), with nine countries having more than 1 million people in this phase. Almost a quarter of them were in the Sudan.

In 2024, 295.3 million people – 22.6 percent of the analysed population – faced high levels of acute food insecurity in 53 of the 65 countries/ territories selected for the Global Report on Food Crises.

Around 190 million people in 40 countries/ territories faced Crisis (IPC/CH Phase 3).

The share of the analysed population in Stressed (IPC/CH Phase 2) increased from 32 to 35 percent in 2024, while the share of the population in Minimal (IPC/CH Phase 1) decreased, suggesting a deterioration in acute food insecurity

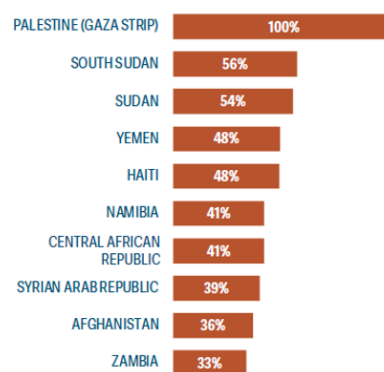
In the 26 countries/territories with nutrition crises, an estimated 37.7 million children aged 6–59 months suffered from acute malnutrition. The Sudan, Yemen, Mali and the **Gaza Strip** had the most severe nutrition crises. The ten countries with the highest global acute malnutrition (GAM) burden saw cases rise from 26.9 million in 2023 to 30.4 million in 2024.



Food crises and nutrition crises often overlap. The majority of children with acute malnutrition are found in seven countries with the largest food crises.

FIG. 1.8 Share of analysed population facing high levels of acute food insecurity, 2024

The ten countries/territories with largest share of their analysed population facing high levels of acute food insecurity



Globally, the majority of forcibly displaced people are in food-crisis contexts. The number in the 53 countries/territories reached 95.8 million in 2024, 75 percent of whom were internally displaced. Acute food insecurity data on displaced populations – available for only 15 countries with food crises – showed higher severity among displaced than resident populations.



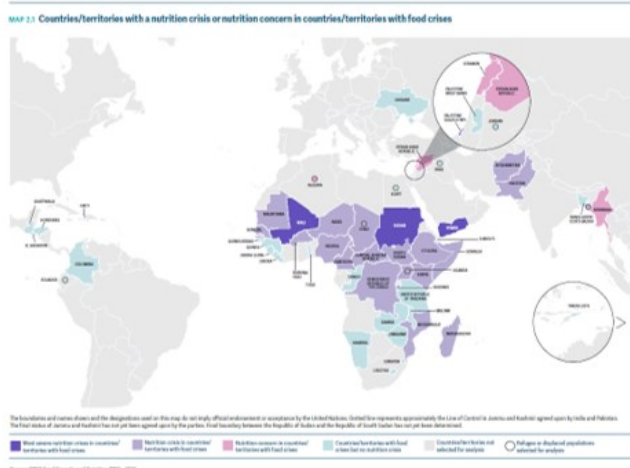
Drivers in 2024

Drivers of acute food insecurity and malnutrition are interlinked and superimposed on structural vulnerabilities.

Conflict/insecurity remained the primary driver in 20 countries/territories, with 139.8 million people facing high levels of acute food insecurity. It was the primary driver for the significant deteriorations in Nigeria, the Sudan and Myanmar, and for the majority of populations in facing Catastrophe (IPC/CH Phase 5).

Weather extremes were the primary driver for 18 countries, with over 96.1 million people facing high levels of acute food insecurity. They intensified as average air temperatures reached historic highs. Flooding was widespread and an El Niño event led to crop failure in many countries in Southern Africa.

Economic shocks were the primary driver in 15 countries, with over 59.4 million people facing high levels of acute food insecurity. The number of people affected is lower than 2023 but remains around twice as many as 2019. These shocks also led to high levels of acute malnutrition as they affected food security, health, and care and service provision.



Water scarcity in Iran is caused by high climatic variability, uneven distribution of water, over exploitation of available water resources, and prioritization of economic development. Water scarcity in Iran is further exacerbated by climate change.

Despite this, water availability has declined since the 20th century whilst demand has increased. By the 2010s, authorities and the United Nations were describing it as a crisis and it contributed to protests in the country.

In July 2025, Iranian experts and senior officials issued severe warnings regarding the country's water situation. Dr. Banafsheh Zehraei, a professor of water resources management at the University of Tehran, warned of an "apocalyptic" scenario in the water sector, stating that only two to three weeks remained to prevent the final disaster of a nationwide drinking water shortage. She also identified the lack of coordination between responsible institutions as one of the main obstacles. [5] Professor Ezatollah Raisi Ardakani warned that Iran no longer has water reserves to withstand years of drought, and that agriculture in the country has become completely dependent on annual rainfall.

In this context, Abbas Aliabadi, the Minister of Energy, referred to the situation as a "water crisis" and emphasized that Tehran is facing its worst water resource situation in the past 100 years. He also warned that the eastern and southeastern regions of Tehran Province would run out of water within a month due to the withdrawal of the Mamloo Dam from the supply system. [The New York Times](#) addressed the issue, stating that Iran is on the brink of an unprecedented crisis in its water resources, a crisis that could lead to the complete depletion of the capital's water reserves and the collapse of vital infrastructure wit-

China starts building world's biggest hydropower dam

1.2tn yuan project has broken ground in Tibet, premier says, despite fears of downstream nations India and Bangladesh

Helen Davidson in Taipei

21 Jul 2025

Construction of the world's biggest hydro-power megadam has begun, China's premier has said, calling it the "project of the century". The huge structure is being built on the Yarlung Tsangpo river, in Tibetan territory.

Li Qiang made the comments on Saturday, at a ceremony in the region to mark the start of the build, leading Chinese markets to rise on the expectation of the long-planned megaproject, first announced in 2020 as part of China's 14th five-year plan.

The dam has drawn criticism from India and Bangladesh, through which the river runs, as well as Tibetan groups and environmentalists.

The project announced by Li is planned for the lower reaches of the river, according to the official state news outlet, Xinhua. Xinhua reported that the project would consist of five cascade hydropower stations, producing an estimated 300 million megawatt hours of electricity annually at a cost of about 1.2tn yuan (£124bn). **The Yarlung Tsangpo megadam** will reportedly harness the power created by the river dropping 2km in about 50km as it winds through a canyon on a U-shaped bend.



The dam is designed to harness the power of the Yarlung Tsangpo river. Photograph: China News Service/Getty Images

India and Bangladesh have voiced concerns over the project, fearing the water could be held or diverted away from them.



The Yarlung Tsangpo becomes the Brahmaputra river as it flows south into India's Arunachal Pradesh and Assam states and finally into Bangladesh as the Jamuna river. Damming it could affect millions of people downstream. The Indian government formally registered its concerns with Beijing over the project in December, and during bilateral meetings between the two countries' foreign ministers in January.

In response, officials have said China does not seek "water hegemony" and never pursues "benefits for itself at the expense of its neighbours".

"China will continue to maintain current exchange channels with downstream nations and step up cooperation on disaster prevention and mitigation," a foreign ministry spokesperson said in December.

Tibetan groups have also noted the presence of sacred sites along the river, and the lack of information about potential population displacement.

The Three Gorges Dam is estimated to have displaced about 1.5 million people.

Environmentalists have also expressed concern about wildlife in the region, as well as the significant tectonic shifting, severe landslides and extreme geography where the dam is expected to go.

The Chinese government rejects the criticism, and says the project will stimulate jobs in the region, increase domestic energy supplies and spur on development in the renewables sector.

"Special emphasis must be placed on ecological conservation to prevent environmental damage," Li said.



July 2025

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