



## **AS LEADERS MEET IN LONDON TO DISCUSS THE DEEPENING GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY CRISIS, AID GROUPS CALL FOR URGENT AND SCALED UP ASSISTANCE FOR COMMUNITIES IN EAST AND CENTRAL AFRICA**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Nairobi, 20 November 2023** – With close to 90 million people<sup>1</sup> across East and Central Africa facing unprecedented levels of hunger, the Interagency Working Group for East and Central Africa (the IAWG) today called on donors and governments to urgently scale up assistance for communities in need and invest in long-term solutions to tackle the root causes of hunger. The appeal comes in the context of the Global Food Security Summit being held in London today, aimed at focusing international attention on ending hunger and malnutrition.

“The UK’s Global Food Security Summit is taking place at a time when a growing number of people in East and Central Africa are faced with life threatening levels of food insecurity resulting from a series of compounding crises, including droughts and floods caused by climate change, as well as conflict, and soaring global food prices,” said Peter Burgess, Director of the IAWG. “Many of these crises are increasingly forgotten, and most humanitarian appeals in the region remain underfunded, leaving millions of people to face destitution, or worse.”

Years of below average rainfall followed by intense, erratic rainfall and flooding have severely affected communities already grappling with the impacts of conflict and soaring global food prices. Many communities are reeling from one crisis to the next, with little respite. For example, after experiencing six consecutive failed rains, communities in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia, are now facing devastating floods. At the same time, the fighting that erupted in Sudan on 15 April has worsened an already precarious situation, [with 20.3 million people](#) now facing acute food insecurity, 6.3 million of whom are in emergency conditions.

Out of [18 hunger hotspots](#) identified by the World Food Programming (WFP) and the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), six—the Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan—are countries where IAWG members provide assistance. Two of these are hotspots of highest concern, and three are of very high concern.

Children under the age of five have been particularly affected by the current hunger crisis, with the region facing unprecedented rates of acute malnutrition. Across Djibouti, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda, Ethiopia and Sudan, [more than 11.5 million children](#) under the age of five

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<sup>1</sup> As of September 2023, 62.6 million people across East Africa (including Burundi, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda and Sudan) were food insecure : <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/food-security-and-nutrition-situation-eastern-africa-q3-2023-november-2023>. An additional 25.4 million people are experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity in the DRC (<https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipc-country-analysis/details-map/en/c/1156611/?iso3=COD>), and close to 1 million in Tanzania (<https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipc-country-analysis/details-map/en/c/1156131/?iso3=TZA>).

are suffering from acute malnutrition in 2023, out of whom 2.9 million will require treatment for severe acute malnutrition (SAM), the life-threatening form of the disease.

Despite the scale of needs, funding to tackle the growing hunger and malnutrition crisis has been insufficient in 2023 and even more worryingly is expected to decline further, with anticipated drops in humanitarian assistance budgets by up to 50% for 2024.

This crisis demands immediate international action and a coordinated response to mitigate the impact of hunger on millions of vulnerable people and put in place interventions that tackle the root causes of the problem. These actions include:

- An urgent scale up of humanitarian assistance for communities in need and a simultaneous investment in longer-term resilience and recovery particularly for climate vulnerable and conflict affected states.
- The use of bilateral and multilateral diplomatic influence to ensure all parties to armed conflicts fully comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law, in particular upholding [UN Security Council 2417](#), to help reverse the global escalation in conflict induced hunger.

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*The Inter-Agency Working Group is a regional coordination and advocacy platform of NGOs working in East and Central Africa.*

**Signatories:**

