



The Famine Review process and Famine Review Committee (FRC)

The Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) uses the Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) system to classify current and projected levels of acute food insecurity. In abiding by IPC standard protocol, FEWS NET and other food security organizations do not declare the highest level of acute food insecurity, Famine (IPC Phase 5), without review from the Famine Review Committee. This document explains how the Famine Review process is activated, what a Famine Review Committee is, and what consensus must be reached before a Famine declaration or projection is made.

What is Famine? According to the IPC, Famine (IPC Phase 5) occurs in a given area when at least 20 percent of the population is facing an extreme lack of food, and this is reflected in at least 30 percent of children under five being acutely malnourished and at least two people per 10,000 inhabitants dying per day due to outright starvation or the consequence of malnutrition and disease. [Read more: What evidence is required for a Famine \(IPC Phase 5\) classification?](#)

What is Famine Likely? Based on IPC protocol, a Famine (IPC Phase 5) classification requires evidence on food security, nutrition, and mortality at or above the IPC's Famine thresholds. If there is insufficient data for a Famine (IPC Phase 5) classification, but the available information indicates that Famine is likely occurring or will occur, then the classification of "Famine Likely" can be applied. A Famine Likely classification allows the IPC to warn about potential Famine in contexts where data are limited. [Read more: What evidence is required for a Famine Likely classification?](#)

When does a Famine Review take place? A Famine Review is mandatory for any Famine classification (Famine or Famine Likely). When a country IPC analysis shows a potential or already identified situation of Famine (IPC Phase 5), a specific procedure is activated in order to confirm a Famine (IPC Phase 5) classification. Famine Reviews can be triggered in several ways:

1. When the country [IPC Technical Working Group](#) or an IPC Global Partner reaches the conclusion that at least one area is classified in Famine (IPC Phase 5) or Famine Likely in the current situation or the projection period; or
2. When there is a breakdown in technical consensus regarding a Famine (IPC Phase 5) or Famine Likely classification.

What is a Famine Review Committee (FRC)? Once a Famine Review process is triggered, an FRC is requested to conduct a review to ensure technical rigor and neutrality of the analysis before the results are confirmed and communicated.

- The FRC is led by a four- to six-member team of independent international food security and nutrition experts who are seen as objective concerning the IPC outcome and who have technical knowledge and experience in the specific crisis context. Other global and regional experts may also be invited to support the analysis.
- The FRC assesses the amount and reliability of direct evidence for outcomes related to:
 - [food consumption](#) and [livelihood change](#);
 - [nutritional status](#); and
 - [mortality](#).
- The FRC reviews and debates available evidence and IPC analysis results and then reaches conclusions on whether a Famine (IPC Phase 5) or Famine Likely classification is warranted.

Request and Activation

1

Country IPC Technical Working Group (TWG) or IPC Global Partner assesses a Famine and the Famine Review Committee is activated.

Preparation of Evidence

2

A global multi-partner team, including representatives of fifteen major agencies, coordinated by the IPC Global Support Unit, conducts a preliminary review of the analysis conducted by the country TWG and evidence available and identifies key issues to be raised to the FRC.

Review of Evidence

3

The IPC Global Support Unit convenes the FRC. Its scope of work includes: (a) reviewing all available evidence for the areas under review; and (b) assessing the plausibility of a Famine (IPC Phase 5) classification for relevant areas.

Final Report

4

Upon completion of their review, the FRC presents their findings to the TWG and to the IPC Global Steering Committee and publishes the FRC report on the IPC website.

How long does an FRC take? The Famine Review process typically takes 2-3 weeks, inclusive of the analysis reviews done by the preparation team and the FRC's review and presentation of their findings.

What happens after an FRC conclusion? The FRC's conclusions and recommendations are communicated to the country's IPC Technical Working Group members, shared with the IPC Global Steering Committee, and communicated to the national government.

- The Technical Working Group has the opportunity to review the FRC’s assessment and make adjustments to the final analysis.
- The FRC’s report is then made publicly available on the IPC website alongside the Technical Working Group’s country report.

What is a declaration of Famine vs. projection of Famine? A Famine (IPC Phase 5) can only be declared if current evidence has met or surpassed the IPC’s Famine thresholds, confirming that Famine (IPC Phase 5) is presently occurring. A Famine (IPC Phase 5) can be projected if an analysis shows that outcomes will likely meet or surpass Famine (IPC Phase 5) thresholds during a future period of time.

Classification	Key message	Key implications for decision- making	Mapping protocols
Current	Famine is Occurring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An area is classified in Famine, which is affecting [‘000] people. 	IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED Immediate large-scale action needed to halt widespread deaths, acute malnutrition and starvation.	Phase 5 Famine 
	Famine is Likely Occurring but limited evidence does not allow confirmation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Famine is likely occurring and while available evidence indicates a Famine, the evidence is not enough to confirm or deny the condition. [‘000] people are likely to be facing catastrophic conditions. 	IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED Immediate large-scale action needs to be initiated to halt the likelihood of widespread deaths, acute malnutrition and starvation. Additional evidence should be collected to confirm the classification urgently.	Phase 5 Famine Likely 
Projected	Famine is Projected to Occur <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are concrete indications that Famine will occur from [date] if conditions evolve as expected and humanitarian assistance is insufficient to prevent it. [‘000] people are likely to face catastrophic conditions. 	IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED Immediate large-scale action needs to be initiated to prevent the likelihood of widespread deaths, acute malnutrition and starvation.	Phase 5 Famine Projected 
	Famine will Likely Occur but limited evidence does not allow confirmation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are concrete indications that Famine will occur from [date] if conditions evolve as expected and humanitarian assistance is insufficient to prevent it. Although evidence is not adequate to confirm the projection of Famine, the limited available evidence indicates that a Famine will likely occur. [‘000] people are likely to face catastrophic conditions. 	IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED Immediate large-scale action needs to be initiated to prevent the likelihood of widespread deaths, acute malnutrition and starvation. Additional evidence should be collected to urgently confirm the classification urgently.	Phase 5 Famine Likely 