Overview of the Integrated Phase Classification (IPC)

May 2017

IPC 2.0: A Common Starting Point for Decision Making

The use of the Integrated Phase Classification Version 2.0 (IPC 2.0) is a landmark in the fight against food insecurity. Widely accepted by the international community, IPC 2.0 describes the severity of food emergencies. Based on common standards and language, this five-phase scale is intended to help governments and other humanitarian actors quickly understand a crisis (or potential crisis) and take action.

Along with the scale, IPC 2.0 provides a framework for technical consensus, protocols for classification, tools for communication, and methods of quality assurance. In practice, analysts use various methods of data collection and analysis (e.g., food prices, seasonal calendars, rainfall, rapid food-security assessments, etc.), but with the IPC, they can describe their conclusions using the same, consistent language and standards. This harmonized approach is particularly useful in comparing situations across countries and regions, and over time.

Launched in September 2012, IPC 2.0 was devised by a global partnership of governmental and nongovernmental agencies. The Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), a leading provider of early warning and analysis on acute food insecurity, actively contributed to the design and implementation of IPC 2.0. FEWS NET uses the IPC to describe the anticipated severity of acute food insecurity in its reports and mapping.

IPC Phases

The IPC allows analysts to classify households and areas according to a five-phase scale. The essence of each phase is captured in the phase descriptions, described in the table on the right. Classification is based on a convergence of available data and evidence, including indicators related to food consumption, livelihoods, malnutrition, and mortality. With this evidence, analysts use the IPC reference tables, which provide illustrative thresholds for each of the five phases, to classify the severity of the current or projected food security situation. Classifying **Famine (IPC Phase 5)**, the fifth stage of food insecurity, is a technically rigorous process that requires meeting three specific criteria:

IPC 2.0 Area Phase Classification

PHASE 1 **Minimal**	More than four in five households (HHs) are able to meet essential food and nonfood needs without engaging in atypical, unsustainable strategies to access food and income.	
PHASE 2 **Stressed**	Even with any humanitarian assistance at least one in five HHs in the area have the following or worse: Minimally adequate food consumption but are unable to afford some essential non-food expenditures without engaging in irreversible coping strategies.	
PHASE 3 **Crisis**	Even with any humanitarian assistance at least one in five HHs in the area have the following or worse: food consumption gaps with high or above usual acute malnutrition OR are marginally able to meet minimum food needs only with accelerated depletion of livelihood assets that will lead to food consumption gaps.	**URGENT ACTION REQUIRED**
PHASE 4 **Emergency**	Even with any humanitarian assistance at least one in five HHs in the area have the following or worse: large food consumption gaps resulting in very high acute malnutrition and excess mortality OR extreme loss of livelihood assets that will lead to food consumption gaps in the short term.	!
PHASE 5 **Famine**	Even with any humanitarian assistance at least one in five HHs in the area have an extreme lack of food and other basic needs where starvation, death, and destitution are evident. Evidence for all three criteria (food consumption, acute malnutrition, and mortality) is required to classify Famine.	**Phase classification would likely be worse without current or programmed humanitarian assistance.**

- At least one in five households faces an extreme lack of food
- More than 30 percent of the population is suffering from acute malnutrition (wasting)
- At least two people out of every 10,000 are dying each day

IPC maps reflect the phase classification and the humanitarian assistance mapping protocol: if the phase classification would likely be worse without current or programmed humanitarian assistance, this is indicated in the mapping with an exclamation point.

For more information on the reference tables and the IPC phases, view the **IPC 2.0 Manual**.

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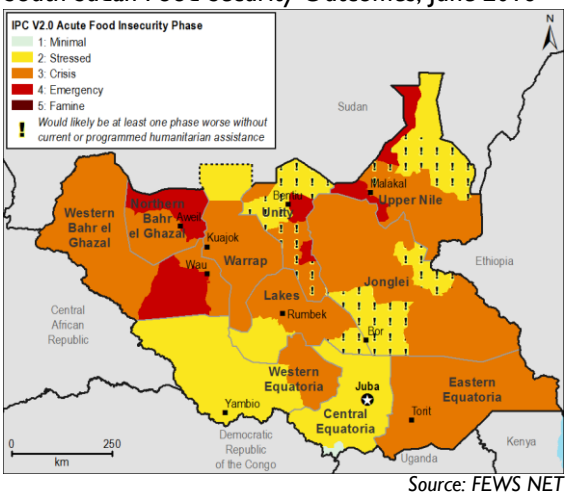
FEWS NET Maps

To visually illustrate food insecurity severity, FEWS NET produces three maps using the IPC 2.0 scale: a current status map and two projection maps covering the eight-month food security outlook period (see the example of a South Sudan map on the right). Countries that FEWS NET monitors remotely are depicted with a colored border that corresponds to the IPC scale.

South Sudan Food Security Outcomes, June 2016



Source: FEWS NET

IPC Analysis and "IPC-Compatible" Analysis

IPC analysis is defined by five main features: 1) the analysis represents a working consensus of technicians representing key stakeholder agencies and relevant sectoral expertise; 2) the IPC reference tables, which specify phase name and description, priority response objectives, and key outcome indicators, are used to determine the phase classification; 3) the analysis adheres to key parameters of units of analysis and accounts for humanitarian assistance; 4) evidence used to support the classification is clearly documented and made available; and 5) the analysis is mapped using the IPC color scheme and phase names.

IPC-compatible analysis includes all of the above five features, except the first; it does not represent a working consensus of technicians from key stakeholder agencies. Due to factors such as the timing of analysis, urgency of the situation, or the need for independence, some organizations may elect to conduct food security situation analysis and classification that is not part of or in agreement with a working consensus of technicians representing key stakeholders. In such cases, as long as the other main criteria of IPC analysis listed above are followed, the analysis can be labelled "IPC-compatible." FEWS NET analysis is IPC-compatible.

Learn more about the IPC at **www.ipcinfo.org**.