

Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
Evidence and Standards for Better Food Security and Nutrition Decisions

FAMINE REVIEW OF THE IPC ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY AND ACUTE MALNUTRITION ANALYSES

**CONCLUSIONS AND
RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR FIVE AREAS IN YEMEN
(ABS, HARADH AND MIDI
IN HAJJAH GOVERNORATE
AND AL HALI AND
AL HAWAK IN AL HUDAYDAH
GOVERNORATE)**



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The IPC Famine Review Committee (FRC) acknowledges the notable efforts made by the members of the Yemen IPC Technical Working Group (TWG), who continue producing regular IPC analysis and updates while facing a highly complex emergency and volatile situation. The Yemen IPC TWG and other members of the humanitarian community also demonstrated high levels of commitment in responding to the FRC's requests for additional information and clarification during the review, which was highly appreciated.

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The Famine Review Process was coordinated and supported by the IPC Global Support Unit (IPC GSU).

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Famine Review Committee (FRC) was activated with a request to assess the plausibility of the IPC Yemen Technical Working Group (TWG) Acute Food Insecurity (AFI) and Acute Malnutrition (AMN) classifications in five areas (Abs, Haradh and Midi in Hajjah Governorate and Al Hali and Al Hawak in Al Hudaydah governorate). The FRC found that the classifications and population estimates, conducted with the information available at the time of the analysis, are broadly plausible for the current and projected classifications in Abs, Al Hali and Al Hawak. However, the FRC concluded that there is not a body of evidence supporting a famine classification for Midi and Haradh. The FRC considers the extrapolation done from Abs data, for both AFI and AMN analyses, are not plausible; and recommends the IPC TWG does not classify these areas but reassess the presence of populations residing in these districts as well as their conditions.

It is paramount to note that in the immediate aftermath of the FRC activation, the Ukraine crisis unfolded generating the need to review the scenario definition for the projected period.

The risks associated with the crisis in Ukraine point to the need to re-assess the assumptions developed by the IPC analysis teams. Notably the prices and supply of wheat and fuel, as well as a change in the geopolitics surrounding the Yemen conflict and possible shifts in humanitarian programming in the coming months.

The FRC has identified a number of risk factors that may be subject to rapid change during 2022. These factors and/or the potential degree of change relate to recent developments and could not have been foreseen at the time of the Yemen IPC analyses. Nevertheless, the FRC believes these factors may affect the TWG classifications over the time periods they cover.

The FRC urges the closest possible monitoring not only of each of the risk factors individually, particularly their cumulative impact, during the current and projection periods. Without close monitoring and rapid response to any changes, it is feasible that the severity of the food security, nutrition, and health situation in Yemen could exceed the levels currently specified in the current and projection time periods.



2. FAMINE REVIEW PROCESS

The Yemen IPC Technical Working Group (TWG) conducted the IPC Acute Food Insecurity (AFI) and the Acute Malnutrition analyses (AMN) in Aden between the 26th of January and the 10th of February 2022. The IPC AFI in Sana'a was conducted between the 26th of January and the 15th of February 2022 while the Acute Malnutrition analysis in Sana'a was conducted between the 15th and the 23rd of February 2022.

During the analysis, the core Yemen TWG expressed concerns about the extremely severe food insecurity and acute malnutrition situation in few specific districts (Abs, Haradh and Midi in Hajjah Governorate and Al Hali and Al Hawak in Al Hudaydah governorate) characterised by indicators close to Famine thresholds. In this context, the Yemen IPC TWG agreed with GSU to activate a Famine Review process, to benefit from an external view on possible famine classifications.

The FRC process was activated on February 17th, 2022. The exercise focused on reviewing the analysis completed by the country IPC Analysis Teams and concluding on the plausibility of the IPC AFI and AMN classifications for the current and projected periods, with a special focus on areas of greatest concern

indicated by the Yemen IPC TWG. The Famine Review followed a two-step process:

- Step 1 - February 21st to 24th, 2022: A multi partner Famine Review preparation exercise was facilitated by the IPC Global Support Unit, aiming to prepare the information and provide technical inputs for the FRC review. The conclusions of the Famine Review preparation process can be found in annex 1.
- Step 2 - February 25th to March 10th, 2022: The FRC conducted a review of the specific districts identified by the Yemen IPC TWG analyses to conclude on the classification plausibility. This was done by exploring the country analysis, all evidence used by the Yemen IPC Analysis Teams (AT), and by conducting interviews with people or organisations having direct knowledge of multiple aspects of Yemen's food security, nutrition and health situation.



3. MAIN FINDINGS

District	Period	Classification done by the Yemen IPC TWG	FRC Conclusions
ABS	January – May 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPC AFI: IPC Phase 4 (Emergency) with 10% in IPC Phase 5 (Catastrophe) IPC AMN: (Hajjah Western Lowland Area): IPC Phase 4 (Critical) 	The FRC found both the IPC AFI and the IPC AMN conclusions are broadly plausible considering the information available at the time of the analysis. The FRC concludes that there is not a body of evidence supporting a famine classification in the current period.
	June – December 2022 (AFI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPC AFI: IPC Phase 4 (Emergency) with 15% in IPC Phase 5 (Catastrophe) IPC AMN : (Hajjah Western Lowland Area): IPC Phase 5 (Extremely Critical) 	The FRC found both the IPC AFI and the IPC AMN conclusions are broadly plausible considering the information available at the time of the analysis; however, we would consider an IPC AMN classification in Phase 4 (Critical) equality plausible. The FRC concludes that there is not a body of evidence supporting a famine classification in the projected period.
	June – September 2022 (AMN)	<i>Areas considered at Risk of Famine by the TWG in a plausible worst case scenario</i>	The FRC considers that the assumptions factored into the projected analysis might no longer be valid in light of the Russian military offensive in Ukraine, the changes in level of projected Humanitarian Assistance and the potential changes in the geopolitics of the Yemen conflict..
MIDI and HARADH	January – May 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPC AFI: IPC Phase 4 (Emergency) with 10% in IPC Phase 5 (Catastrophe) IPC AMN (Hajjah Western Lowland Area): IPC Phase 4 (Critical) 	The FRC considers the extrapolation, done from Abs data on both AFI and AMN analyses, not plausible. It recommends that the IPC TWG does not classify these areas and reassess the presence and size of populations residing in these districts along with their food security, nutrition, and health conditions.
	June – December 2022 (AFI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPC AFI: IPC Phase 4 (Emergency) with 15% in IPC Phase 5 (Catastrophe) IPC AMN : (Hajjah Western Lowland Area): IPC Phase 5 (Extremely Critical) 	
	June – September 2022 (AMN)	<i>Areas considered at Risk of Famine in a plausible worst case scenario if the population remaining in the area is above 10,000 people</i>	
AL HALI and AL HAWAK	January – May 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPC AFI: IPC Phase 4 (Emergency) with 0% in IPC Phase 5 (Catastrophe) IPC AMN (City Zone area): IPC Phase 4 (Critical) 	The FRC considers the AFI classification of IPC Phase 4 (Emergency) are broadly plausible. The IPC AMN classification IPC Phase 4 (Critical) is also considered plausible. The FRC concludes that there is not a body of evidence supporting a famine classification in the current period.
	June – December 2022 (AFI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPC AFI: IPC Phase 4 (Emergency) with 5% in IPC Phase 5 (Catastrophe) IPC AMN (City Zone area): IPC Phase 4 (Critical) 	The FRC found both the IPC AFI and the IPC AMN conclusions are broadly plausible considering the information available at the time of the analysis. The FRC concludes that there is not a body of evidence supporting a famine classification in the projected period.
	June – September 2022 (AMN)	<i>Areas not detected at Risk of Famine within the projection period (Jun-Dec 2022), but likely to shift into famine should a worse- case scenario apply for a protracted period of time beyond the projection period.</i>	The FRC considers that the assumptions factored into the projected analysis might no longer be valid in light of the Russian military offensive in Ukraine, the changes in level of projected Humanitarian Assistance and the potential changes in the geopolitics of the Yemen conflict.



4. FRC ASSESSMENT OF THE PLAUSIBILITY OF THE YEMEN IPC TWG ANALYSIS (FEBRUARY 2022)

The FRC assessed the plausibility of the IPC Acute Food Insecurity and Acute Malnutrition analyses conducted by the Yemen IPC Analysis Teams (AT) for Abs, Haradh and Midi in Hajjah Governorate and Al Hali and Al Hawak in Al Hudaydah governorate.

4.1 Abs district in Hajjah Governorate

Abs district is located in the southern part of Hajjah governorate, bordering Al Hudaydah. Abs district context is characterised by a northern part under the influence of the Internationally Recognized Government (IRG) and a southern part under the Sana'a Based Authorities (SBA). The north-eastern part of the sub-district of Bani Hasan, bordering Midi and Hayran, represents a frontline in the conflict, while the southern part of the district is host to a high number of displaced population (about 180,000 if considering only those in camps) coming from the neighbouring Abs sub-districts and other Hajjah districts such as Midi, Haradh and Hayran.

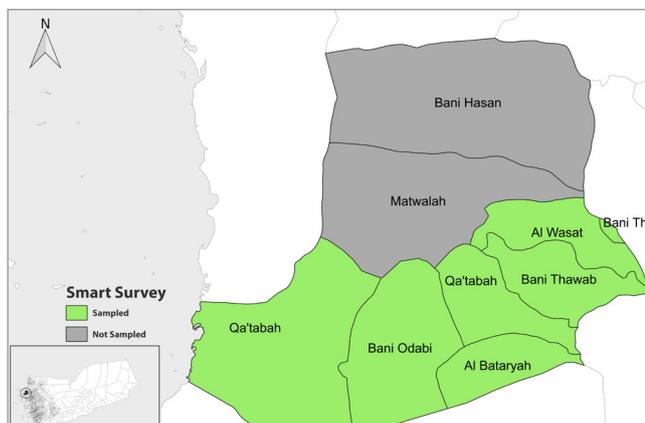
Abs district benefited from data collection in both the Food Security and Livelihood Assessment (FSLA, in October and November 2021) and the SMART surveys (November-December 2021). Both surveys indicate high severity of food security and nutrition indicators. The context description provided by the IPC Technical Working group supported this severity and the prospects outlined in the projected period also highlight a tendency towards deterioration in the coming months.

The FRC reviewed the data provided, the elements communicated by the IPC analysis team, and feedback from the key informants, and concurs with the conclusion reached by the Yemen IPC TWG, considering the information available at the time of the analysis.

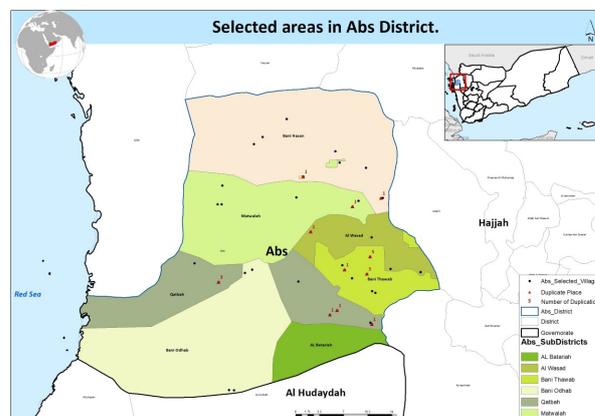
While broadly agreeing that the IPC Analysis team produced a plausible conclusion for the current period (January to May 2022), the FRC observed that, regarding the Acute Food Insecurity analysis:

- The estimation of population in IPC Phase 5 (Catastrophe) at 10% for the current period, might seem conservative if compared with the prevalence of population in this phase indicated by the Households Hunger Score (25.1%) and also by its cross-tabulation with the Food Consumption Score poor (16% with 21 cut-off).
- The FRC would however concur on a conservative reading of the Food Security and Livelihood Assessment (FSLA) results due to the fact that it likely that the FSLA and SMART sampling are over-representing resident population and, in the case of FSLA, over-representing population who did not benefit from assistance. In particular, the residence status (UN population task force) would indicate that 68% of the Abs population are displaced (against the FSLA finding of only 18% IDP) and records of Humanitarian Food Assistance (HFA) delivered would indicate that 87% of the residents received HFA (against an FSLA finding of about 14% of respondents receiving HFA). In conclusion, a deeper analysis of the FSLA sampling indicates that data collection, although covering all Abs sub-districts, including the northern areas in conflict, might be over-representing the Abs population that is not receiving assistance. Similarly, the analysis of the sampling of the SMART survey suggests that IDP in camps were not included and only the 'relatively stable' southern sub-districts were accessed. Furthermore, only about 12% of the Abs SMART sample includes IDP. However, in absence of recent population records for Bani Hassan and Matwalah it cannot be meaningfully determined whether a selection bias occurred and how this could have affected the final prevalence.

¹ Source CCCM: https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/yemen_cccm



Map 1. SMART coverage in Abs (Source: UNICEF)



Map 2. FSLA coverage in Abs (Source: WFP)

- The FRC also considers the use of the cut off of 28 for poor Food Consumption Score (FCS), resulting in a prevalence of 84%, might lead to an overestimation of the severity. In fact, this cut off is chosen by certain countries to reflect the high consumption of sugar and oil, however when it comes to analyses aiming at detecting famine, and considering sugar and oil do also provide nutrients and calories that can prevent starvation and acute malnutrition, a reanalysis of FCS data using a cut off of 21 is useful. While the FCS poor using the cut-off of 21 indicates a prevalence of 45%, a cut-off of 28 suggests 84%.
- The information provided on Livelihood Coping Strategies, which would have helped clarify the level of exhaustion of the strategies, is overall not usable. In fact, the FRC raises concerns on: (1) the use of strategies selected to construct the indicator are lacking appropriate contextualization, especially for the emergency strategies (for instance, "Sale of Last Female Animal" is computed as Emergency strategy in urban contexts); (2) the use of seven strategies to inform 'crisis' copying, against the three that should compose a standard module, inflating the crisis prevalence; (3) the extremely high prevalence of 'not applicable' responses

to most common strategies, as well as (4) the extremely high responses of non-employment of coping strategies because there was no need ("no lack of food"), which is found to be in strong contradiction with the high inadequacy of food consumption detected by the other indicators.

Regarding the projected period, June to December 2022, the IPC AFI Analysis Teams stated that the deterioration in Abs is mostly linked to the reduction of HFA, at half the levels assumed for the current period, and a possible escalation of the conflict. Alternatively, according to key informants, the conflict in Hajjah is expected to remain 'stable' at the same intensity and spread as in the current period.

Overall, the FRC would concur with the slight deterioration of the prevalence of population in the highest phases in the projected period, if taking into consideration the contextual elements and information available at the time of the analysis. However, the FRC process coincided with the Russian military offensive in Ukraine, an event that has created scenarios that might deviate from the one assumed by the IPC technical working group. The new, unfolding, scenarios are described at page 11.



In terms of Acute Malnutrition analysis, the FRC concurs with the current classification (IPC Phase 4 Critical), based on the level of Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) Weight for Height (WHZ) detected by the SMART survey conducted in November – December 2021. Regarding the projection period, June to September 2022, the FRC considers that an IPC Phase 5 (Extremely Critical) AMN classification could be plausible, as much as an IPC Phase 4 (Critical) AMN classification, in fact:

- The increase of the GAM prevalence detected by the SMART survey conducted in Abs in November – December 2021, showing 25.2% GAM WHZ, compared to previous years (GAM WHZ 19.8% on March-April 2019 and 14.9% on March-April 2018), could indicate a progressive deterioration. However, it has to be considered that seasonality could also play a role in explaining these different levels across the years;
- Trends in hospital admissions for complicated SAM in Abs indicate that there is a seasonality pattern with the peak in August-September and the troughs during February - May. The overall level of admissions has been increasing over the last two years. The IPC AMN analysis classifications rely on GAM WHZ prevalence, therefore an increase in complicated SAM admissions is not directly indicative of an increase or decrease in GAM WHZ prevalence. However, the increase in such admissions during 2018-2021 supports the idea that the increase in GAM prevalence from 2019 to 2021 is indeed taking place irrespective of seasonal fluctuations.

In conclusion, all of the available SMART surveys were collected in periods outside of the “peak” period for acute malnutrition, therefore the 25.2% GAM prevalence reported in the November-December 2021 SMART survey could conceivably deteriorate to 30% in the projection period, which covers the potential peak of the undernutrition incidence. Similarly, however, the FRC estimates that an IPC AMN Phase 4 (Critical) for the projection period would also be equally plausible, considering the high level of Humanitarian Food

Assistance provided and the still functioning health and nutrition programmes in Abs.

Similarly to the FRC conclusions on the AFI projection, the FRC highlights the risk of different scenarios materialising as a consequence of the Russian military offensive in Ukraine.

4.2. Midi and Haradh districts in Hajjah Governorate

Midi and Haradh are districts characterised by being conflict frontlines. Due to access issues, neither the SMART nor the FSLA teams were able to collect data in these territories. The Yemen IPC analysis teams (AT) proceeded with the classification of these areas employing protocols for similar nearby areas, as allowed by the IPC Manual 3.1 . The Yemen IPC AT justified the extrapolation with the following rationale:

- On the food security side, food access and availability in Midi and Haradh were not too different from those of Abs, as the three districts are conflict frontlines and have territories under different authorities influence;
- On the acute malnutrition side, the analysis team indicated that in the past, the districts of Midi and Haradh have been included in the Western Hajjah Lowland and therefore prevalence in these districts is to be considered similar to those of Abs.

While the FRC acknowledges the adherence to protocols by the analysis team, the level of similarity among Abs on one side and Midi and Haradh on the other, is considered by the FRC as highly questionable due to the following reflections:

- The livelihood zone similarities may have applied in the past, in a time prior to these areas becoming extremely volatile as the main frontline of Hajjah Governorate. As the situation currently stands, most of the livelihood options that defined this zone are no longer viable;

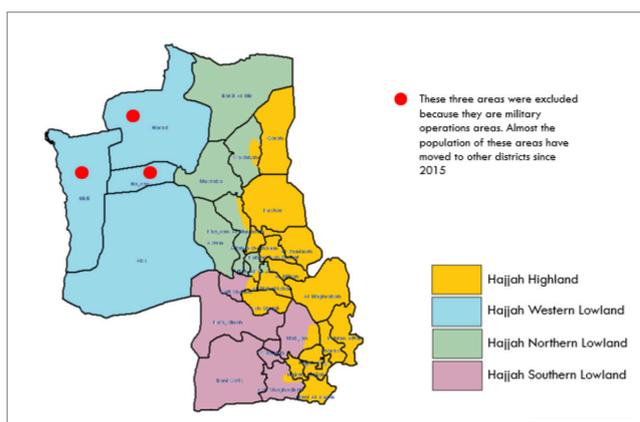
² IPC Manual 3.1, page 46 and 164: https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/manual/IPC_Technical_Manual_3_Final.pdf



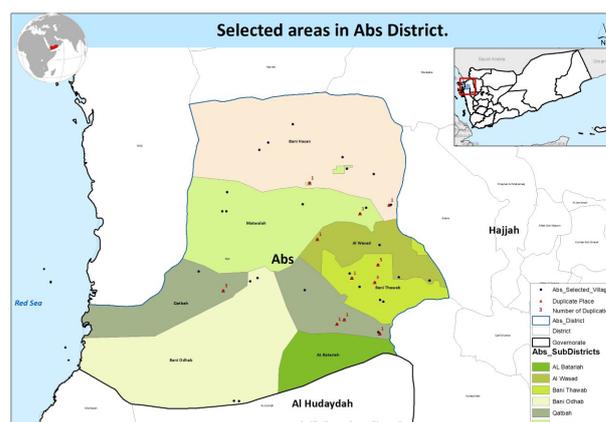
- The FSLA drew its sample in Abs including both “stable” areas in the southern part of Abs and active conflict areas in the north, whilst the SMART sampling is only representative of the southern part of Abs, and therefore no area of active conflict was included. The nutrition data seems therefore unlikely to be representative of the condition of Midi and Haradh frontlines zones;
- The population composition seems broadly different, with the Abs population including mostly residents and displaced population inflows, coming from the surrounding districts (receiving area). In contrast, Midi and Haradh are likely to be highly militarised and areas of outflows, with only a few households or head of households remaining to protect livelihood assets;
- The access to services is also considerably different. Markets are functional in Abs, and the access to humanitarian food assistance, nutrition and health programmes seem to have been uninterrupted at

this point in time, despite the inability to provide a consistent presence in the territory. Alternatively, Midi and Haradh seem to be served by very few (two according to key informants) actors, with an overall inability to provide direct assistance to the population. Midi and Haradh populations mostly access humanitarian food assistance and health services by temporarily displacing to Abs, by road or by sea, and returning to the area;

- The Yemen IPC AT has made broad assertions that the conditions in Haradh and Midi are similar to Abs, though likely to be worse. However, the IPC AT classifications of Midi and Haradh for both AFI and AMN remain the same as Abs. It is unclear which elements can be brought upfront to indicate higher or lower severity in Midi and Haradh, considering the absolute absence of data and the impossibility to obtain even informal descriptions by key informants, due to the fact that the areas have not been accessed in many months.



Map 3. Hajjah Western Lowland SMART survey coverage (Source: GSU)



Map 4. FSLA coverage in Abs (Source: WFP)



Besides questioning the extrapolation of Abs data to Haradh and Midi, the FRC is also concerned about the divergent information received with regards to the population currently living in these districts. Assessing accurate population numbers for Yemen is complicated with the last census dating back to 2004 and no up-to-date comprehensive Displacement Tracking Matrix to record population movements. For the official Central Statistics Office (CSO) population figures, the 2004 census figures are adjusted for population growth estimates. Whereas for humanitarian planning purposes the UN, through the population task force, assesses the most likely population levels adjusting the CSO population estimation for IDP inflows and outflows from the CSO baseline. A third source of information, regarding uniquely the displaced populations in sites, is provided by CCCM. Records of HFA can also be used for triangulation.

For these areas, according to CSO population estimates, Midi has a population of 33,759 people and Haradh has a population of 153,419. Adjustments made to these estimates, accounting for inflows and outflows, would bring the population to about 5,478 in Midi, while Haradh would actually present a negative number. The figures provided by the CCCM cluster would indicate that there are 3,761 displaced people hosted in camps in Midi and 3,494 displaced people hosted in camps in Haradh. Key informants, on the contrary, indicated that almost all civilians are likely to have fled from Haradh and Midi, and the only populations remaining in the districts are combatants. Contrastingly, the Food Security and Agriculture Cluster (FSAC) records on HFA, distributions benefitted 33,495 people in Midi and 10,885 in Haradh in December 2021. However, the Yemen IPC AT also informed the FRC that the Midi population is regularly moving to Abs via road and sea to collect assistance.

Under these circumstances, with data not having been collected, areas not having been accessed by partners able to document the conditions on the ground and population figures that are highly contradictory, ranging from 3-4,000 to 150,000, the FRC strongly recommends to not classify these

areas, and to proceed with investigating the actual resident and displaced population numbers and consequently, assess their food security and acute malnutrition conditions. This is essential to ensure any remaining civilians are assisted in a consistent manner.

4.3. Al Hali and Al Hawak in Al Hudaydah Governorate

Al Hudaydah city is located along the Red Sea coast and is one of the main seaports in the country. It comprises three administrative areas, Al Hali to the South, Al Hawak to the East and Al Mina to the North. The city's fishing and importation ports are of strategic importance and sources of livelihoods and economic activity. Port functionality is reportedly low with the port largely receiving humanitarian cargo or related imports while fishing activities are dramatically reduced from the pre-conflict period. Al Hudaydah port serves as an origin point to distribute humanitarian cargo or fuel to nearby areas and districts. Poverty levels are reportedly higher in Al Hali and Al Hawak than Al Mina, which is considerably more residential and economically better off per Key Informants. Conflict was reported to impact the main ports and economic activities in Al Hudaydah city. Fishing activities have been severely disrupted with attacks reported on fishing fleets, facilities or processing centres compounded by lack of access to coastal areas due to insecurity. Casual labour opportunities at Al Hudaydah port are still available, though highly volatile and unstable as reported by key informants. The two districts' total population records vary between 150,000 and 550,000, with almost one third of the population being displaced.

The FRC considers the AFI classification at IPC Phase 4 (Emergency) as plausible; however, the estimation of population in IPC Phase 5 (Catastrophe), is questionable. The FRC raises some concerns on the analysis for Al Hali and Al Hawak that need to be highlighted. For the IPC AFI analysis:

- The FRC finds that based on the data provided, the classification of population in IPC Phase 5 (Catastrophe), 0% in the current and 5% in the projected period, is quite conservative compared



to what the food consumption indicators would suggest. In fact, the Household Hunger Scale indicates that 22.5% (Al Hali) and 10.8% (Al Hawak) of surveyed households experienced Very Severe hunger (HHS=5-6). While the reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI) has around a quarter of households with a score over 42 in both areas, which would mean they adopted each of the five coping strategies included in the indicator at least six times in the week prior to the survey. A cross tabulation of HHS and Food Consumption Score (FCS) also shows at least 9% (both areas) of households having both poor FCS and very severe HHS. Based on this information the FRC considers that the TWG may have been too conservative with the population estimated to be in IPC Phase 5 (Catastrophe) in the current;

- The FRC highlights the discrepancy among experiential indicators (extremely severe) and food frequency indicators (less severe) and raises concerns about the quality of the data, especially considering the higher possibility of “coaching” respondents to provide the most severe answers to the rCSI and HHS questions compared to the same for FCS and rCSI. In this sense, the FRC would consider the “lower’ IPC AT estimates as a way to balance possible data quality issues;
- The FRC recognises the different datasets of Al Hali and Al Hawak, with the latter presenting a less severe situation, which however seems to have brought the analysis team into conducting identical classification, whose justification is not provided.

In conclusion however, while expressing concerns over data quality in these two areas, **the FRC broadly concurs with the conclusion reached by the Yemen IPC AT for the current period, considering the information available at the time of the analysis. Similarly, the FRC concurs with the AFI analysis conclusions also for the projections,** with the overall caveat that the urban

areas present a heavy dependence on both the market dynamics and the port functionality and any changes with relation to these elements will have major impacts on household food security.

In terms of IPC Acute Malnutrition analysis classification, the FRC concurs with the Yemen IPC AT findings of a Phase 4 (Critical) classification for the current and projected period.

4.4. Additional considerations on mortality

One outstanding question that was raised during the IPC AFI and AMN analyses, and that the FRC was requested to investigate by the FRC preparation team, is the poor convergence between the Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) prevalence and the incidence of mortality. GAM is at Critical level (IPC AMN Phase 4) in Al Hudaydah and borderline between Critical and Extremely Critical level (IPC AMN Phase 4 and 5) in Abs, while the mortality data available from SMART surveys in both areas are consistent with IPC Phase 1 or 2.

Hajjah Western Lowland (Abs) (SMART 2021 November-December):

- GAM WHZ 25.2% (20.8 - 30.1 95% CI) and SAM 5.5% (3.6 - 8.2 95% CI), MUAC 15.1% (11.8 - 19.1 95% CI)
- CDR 0.40 (0.26-0.62), U5DR 0.49 (0.15-1.62)

Al Hudaydah City (SMART 2021 December):

- GAM WHZ 20.9% (16.9-25.6 95% CI) and SAM WHZ 2.7% (1.6- 4.7 95% CI); GAM MUAC: 8.4% (5.6-12.2 95% CI)
- CDR 0.09 (0.03-0.23) and U5DR 0.29 (0.07-1.20) at Zonal level for Al Hudaydah City

Plausibility checks conducted with the SMART survey data suggest that there are no particular concerns with



relation to data quality for either acute malnutrition or mortality indicators. Furthermore, key informants did not suggest any particular cultural or social issue that might point to under or overreporting child or adult mortality in household surveys, although the official registration of child deaths was said to be low. Projected UN mortality estimates for Yemen as a whole indicate a crude death rate in the region of 0.2 deaths/10,000/day and a U5DR of 0.3 deaths/10,000/day.

It is therefore considered plausible that Abs could have a CDR of 0.4 and the FRC noted that although the estimate from Al Hudaydah of was only 0.09, the confidence interval included 0.2.

Under-five mortality is a rare event, and it should be noted that SMART surveys are not powered to provide precise estimates of the U5DR. They are usually only designed to produce reasonably precise estimates of the U5DR at the threshold levels used to inform IPC classification of famine. Attempting to attain much higher precision would result in sample sizes much higher than those common in SMART surveys and this is not feasible from logistical and quality control perspectives. To obtain more precise estimates of U5 mortality rates other methods of mortality estimation

should be considered.

When considering the lack of convergence between the IPC AFI, AMN and mortality indicators an important factor to bear in mind is the demographics of the Yemeni population. Yemen has a very young population and will therefore have a low baseline crude death rate, lower than many highly developed countries.

To conclude, the opinion of the FRC is that the mortality data used by the TWG for their analysis was plausible.

However, further epidemiological and anthropological work is recommended to understand whether the death rates reported by surveys in Yemen are fully reflecting the mortality burden experienced by the population. This should include a focus on the extent to which neonatal mortality is recorded in surveys, and whether population samples included an unbiased proportion of adult males.

³ *Death rate, crude (per 1,000 people) - Yemen, Rep. | Data (worldbank.org)*



5. SITUATION EVOLUTION

The FRC conducted its assessment of the Yemen IPC AT analyses based on the evidence available to the analysis team at the time of their analysis on 26th January to 23rd February 2022. Since that time however, a number of key events and changes have occurred that are likely to alter the analysis of projections for both AFI and AMN. These include:

- The Russian military offensive in Ukraine and resulting increases in prices of wheat, cooking oil, crude oil for transportation, fossil fuel used for cooking and agriculture activities, fertilisers, and other market disruptions;
- Changes in levels of Humanitarian Food Assistance, including additional pledges beyond what the TWG had considered, as well as the potential for the global humanitarian system to be strained to deal with increased humanitarian needs this year;
- Potential changes in the geopolitics of the Yemen conflict, such as the potential designation of Ansar Allah as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) by individual countries.

These newly unfolding events, together with already existing shocks and trends (e.g., conflict, currency devaluation, rising food prices, worsening acute malnutrition, and others), while difficult to predict, have the potential to be a 'perfect storm' that could dramatically deteriorate food and nutrition security. The FRC strongly recommends that a new IPC Risk of Famine analysis is conducted in the very near future taking into consideration the elements mentioned above.

5.1. Russia military offensive in Ukraine

The Russia military offensive in Ukraine will likely lead to further steep increases in fossil fuel and food prices as Yemen is highly dependent on food imports including wheat, sunflower oil, and others; and, more specifically, the high reliance on imports from Ukraine and Russia. Wheat prices were already on an upward global trajectory prior to the dramatic deterioration of the situation in Ukraine. Factoring in the share of global supply provided by Russia and Ukraine (12% of total calories traded in the world), the impact on wheat prices going forward is likely to be substantial. Moreover, the impacts of the crisis are not limited to wheat prices, as multiple commodities (edible oils that are not easily substitutable) will be impacted. While cereals might be easier to replace, edible oils cannot be replaced, and it contains higher calories per gram than cereals. Sunflower seed oil in particular for example will be largely impacted by the crisis, as Ukraine supplied 50% of the world's supply, while palm oil price is already skyrocketing in response to higher demand in substitution of sunflower seeds oil.

In case Ukraine and Russia cannot deliver this year, a significant quantity of wheat will be missing from the global supply chain and countries like Yemen will need to resort to alternate supply channels. Substitutions of supply sources are however not so simple. India, Argentina or the United States might be the possible alternative sources of wheat for Yemen. However, not only will the substitution generate an increase in prices, linked to the increase of transportation costs, due to both higher distances and increased fuel price, there is also a risk that some countries might place export bans on wheat (as India and Argentina did following the global wheat price spike in 2007-08). Longer routes and higher fuel costs are also compounded by increased fertiliser prices in the wake of the crisis, which will also bleed into the overall price of wheat and edible oils in the global market.

³ IFPRI <https://www.ifpri.org/blog/how-will-russias-invasion-ukraine-affect-global-food-security>

⁵ *Ibidem*



The implication of the rise in fuel prices is also likely to have a ripple effect on household ability to access a multitude of services. The increased cost of transportation will severely restrict mobility and limit households' capacity to cook, power water generators at community and household level for human use, and to access health facilities, markets, or even humanitarian services. Considering the risk of elevated price of all commodities, there is a need to monitor and assess the impacts of transfer value of cash based food assistance and out of pocket expenses for access to health care and clean drinking water.

The price of food in the areas under the Sana'a Based Authorities, as indicated by key informants, has been artificially stabilised. The situation would need to be monitored to ensure these stabilisation methods can hold up against a potentially massive price increase in global grains and edible oils, as well as fuel and water prices. The impact in the IRG controlled areas will be unequivocally negative, where price levels fluctuate more openly.

5.2. Changes in level of projected Humanitarian Food Assistance

According to the information shared by the Food Security and Agriculture Cluster (FSAC) in Yemen, at the time of the FSLA and SMART data collection (November-December 2021) around 10 million people were assisted with a 80% coverage of their caloric needs and 2.6 million were assisted with a 40% coverage of their caloric needs (10 million were receiving every month a ration covering 80% of their caloric needs and 2.6 million were receiving the same every other month). In the current period of the IPC, from January to May 2022, the IPC TWG factored into the analysis a ration covering 80% of the caloric needs for 6.5 million people, while for the projected period, from June to December 2022, it has been assumed as most likely scenario the distribution of a ration covering 80% of the caloric needs for 3.25 million people. **In summary, the IPC AFI analysis ream estimated that the humanitarian**

food assistance in the current period would be half those distributed at the time of data collection, and was expected to be further cut by half during the projected period.

This assumption of dramatic cut of HFA has been, together with the economic deterioration and the conflict evolution, a major negative assumption in the Yemen IPC AFI analysis. However, it is important to note that new information was shared by partners following the conclusion of the IPC analysis on recent funding pledges. This information would indicate that the HFA from February to May 2022 might be increased to cover 5 million people with a ration covering 80% of the caloric needs and 8 million people every other month with the same ration. Additionally, from June to December, WFP estimates that they might be able to assist 5 million people with a ration covering 80% of the caloric needs monthly.

Major resource partners in the country seem to confirm that funding levels in 2022 would not differ much from those of 2021, although full commitments could not be made prior to the High-Level Pledging Event on the Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen to be held on March 16th, 2022. This major adjustment to the assumptions related to HFA was not factored into the analysis, considering it does not meet the IPC criteria for inclusion of HFA in projection periods - as funds have not yet been confirmed .

While the additional pledges of HFA are likely to improve the overall food and nutrition security situation, the possibility for a widespread humanitarian crisis resulting from the Russian military offensive in Ukraine as well as demands from other crises could also mean that the international donor community will not have the necessary resources to meet a spiked increase in assistance should Yemen and other countries be in need.

⁶ IPC Guidance Note on Humanitarian Food Assistance (August 2021): https://docs.google.com/document/d/1silO64wjf7h5B_mhyCmTYwLXnl7Tz1TS/edit



Despite this reassuring scenario on humanitarian aid in Yemen, the FRC would recommend the Yemen IPC TWG to update their analysis including this new information once fully confirmed. In particular, the FRC urges the Yemen IPC TWG to monitor how the Ukraine crisis might affect the cost per beneficiary of the assistance planned, taking into account its impact on transportation costs and considering the expected increase in fuel prices as well as potential additional cost of a change in suppliers.

5.3. Potential changes in the geopolitics of the Yemen conflict

In addition to the Resolution 2624 (2022) adopted by the Security Council on February 28th 2022, there is an added risk linked to the United Arab Emirates pushing for the Sana'a based authorities to be labelled a Foreign Terrorist Organisation (FTO) by individual countries. Such a designation would have implications for trade into Yemen as private traders, who account for a large part of the country's importation and their suppliers, would be hesitant to continue their commercial activities in fear of violating sanctions. The change in designation could have widespread implications in all territories that are under the Sana'a-Based Authorities as well as implications at district level in the Al Hudaydah area. Residents of both Al Hali and Al Hawak districts report being nearly totally dependent on casual labor opportunities for their income, with the port of Al Hudaydah being the main source of those opportunities. Any reduction in shipments or complications in shipments reaching Al Hudaydah port would reduce those opportunities, and could push the most vulnerable households into worse food security outcomes. At the broader level of all territories controlled by the Sana'a-Based Authorities, it could spell declining imports or at least significantly greater complications in food imports, and would equally affect the importation of fuel, medicine and other basic commodities. It should be noted that a larger proportion of Yemen's population live in areas under Sana'a-Based Authorities.



6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The FRC is providing the following recommendations to concerned stakeholders, including the TWG, humanitarian agencies, donors, and governmental and administrative authorities.

Close monitoring recommendations

First and foremost, the FRC has identified a number of risk factors that may be subject to rapid change during 2022. These factors and/or the potential degree of change relate to recent developments and could not have been foreseen at the time of the TWG classifications. Nevertheless, the FRC believes these factors may affect the TWG classifications over the time periods they cover. These risk factors are outlined below and the FRC urges the closest possible monitoring not only of each of the risk factors individually, but in particular their cumulative impact, during the current and projection periods. Without close monitoring and rapid response to any changes, it is feasible that the severity of the food security, nutrition, and health situation in Yemen could exceed the levels currently specified in the current and projection time periods. (i.e. up to December 2022).

- **Increase in the price of wheat, and other food prices such as edible oils, inflation associated with the Russian military offensive in Ukraine.** Nearly a quarter of Yemen's wheat imports come from Ukraine and Russia, and the price of wheat—already at a ten-year high prior to the invasion, jumped more than 50% during the first week of the conflict. Edible oil is also a significant concern. As outlined above, both the increased price and the likely requirement for alternative supply routes will likely result in substantially increased prices in Yemen not only for wheat, but also for other grains (as global markets adjust to substitution). One critical factor to monitor is whether Ukraine is able to plant crops this season - implying much longer-term disruptions if it cannot. Another factor is disruptions to or restrictions on Russian exports. A third factor is whether other traditional exporters restrict or ban grain and edible oil exports.

- **Fuel and other commodities price inflation.** Due to both the conflict and increasing prices of oil and gas on global markets as the result of banning Russian oil and gas, the price of petroleum and gas - already a major constraint - is likely to go much higher.
- **Sana'a Based Authorities being designated a Foreign Terrorist Organization.** As noted above this could have both localized and widespread implications for food security, health and nutrition, fuel supplies and other goods and services needed to sustain the population.
- **Levels of support for HFA and other humanitarian budgets.** Donors currently do not foresee any cuts in support for Yemen but depending on how the conflict situation in Ukraine develops, there is a risk that some donors may reprioritize assistance.
- **Conflict.** The FRC encourages continued close monitoring of conflict drivers as is already being done by the TWG.
- Further anthropological monitoring of **social networks** is necessary to understand their level of stress and their ability to continue playing a prominent role in Famine prevention.

Updating analyses. If possible, Midi and Haradh districts should be re-assessed.

Monitoring the above risks individually will not be difficult but analysing the combined effects of these risks on the food security and nutrition situation will require coordination and cooperation. The FRC recognizes that there are already a number of real-time monitoring efforts being implemented in Yemen. The FRC encourages these efforts to work together closely, to share available data in real time—particularly outcome information related to current food security, nutritional status, and health status. Real Time Monitoring of the assumptions used to develop the IPC AMN projections is important particularly for all areas where nutrition status is of greatest concern. Collecting additional data in the short term may not



be possible, but better sharing and analysis of existing data is strongly recommended.

While an IPC analysis is intended as a snapshot of current status at a given point in time, the situation in Yemen currently is highly volatile. The FRC recommends regularly updating current status and the analysis of the risk of famine, even though a complete IPC analysis is not possible. The FRC stands ready to rapidly review updated analyses if necessary.

Additional recommendations to improve Humanitarian Information Systems

- All controlling authorities should facilitate improved access to operational and technical humanitarian organisations to ensure enhanced transparency about the humanitarian situation and ensure people in need are located and services provided;
- Staff from humanitarian organisations should be allowed to participate directly in all humanitarian assessments, including FSLA and SMART surveys granting full transparency in terms of survey design, data collection, data analysis;
- Data sharing and interoperability of humanitarian information is imperative;
- Full reports from SMART and FSLA surveys should be made available in Arabic and English to facilitate information exchange within the humanitarian community. Reports should make explicit how the surveys were designed and what decisions were taken on population groups to include and exclude. Information on the cluster locations sampled in SMART and FSLA surveys should be reported in each survey report;
- The Livelihoods Coping Strategies Index should be revised to better reflect the situation on the ground and should be thoroughly pre-tested and validated for different contexts in Yemen;
- Information made available to the FRC indicated that the population samples included in the December 2021 SMART surveys contained only a

small proportion of IDPs. This is concerning given the possibility that the food security, nutrition, and health status of IDP populations may be significantly different than that of resident populations. Surveys should ideally be designed to measure the status of IDP (in host and camp) and residents separately. At a minimum, surveys should ascertain and report the residency status (resident or IDP) and duration of displacement of the sampled population.

- Seasonality should be fully considered in the planning of assessments in a way to allow comparability of surveys results over years.
- Further epidemiological and anthropological work is recommended to understand if the low death rates reported by surveys in Yemen are fully reflecting the mortality burden experienced by the population. This should include a focus on the extent to which neonatal mortality is recorded in surveys, and whether population samples include an unbiased proportion of adult males.



7. ANNEXES

Annex 1. Multi-Partners FRC Preparation team recommendations to the FRC

Annex 2. Famine Review Committee Terms of Reference



ANNEX 1. MULTI-PARTNERS FRC PREPARATION TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE FRC

Areas	AFI AF Current	AFI TWG Projection	AMN Phase Current	AMN Phase Projection	RTQR Current	RTQR Projection	Request for FRC review
Al Hali	Ph 3: 55% Ph 4: 35% Ph 5: 0%	Ph 3: 40% Ph 4: 50% Ph 5: 5%	4	4	Agree with both TWGs. Does not reach famine thresholds.	Disagree with TWGs. Deterioration in projection periods is uncertain.	<u>Yes</u>
Al Hawak	Ph 3: 45% Ph 4: 35% Ph 5: 0%	Ph 3: 40% Ph 4: 50% Ph 5: 5%	4	4	Agree with both TWGs. Does not reach famine thresholds.	Agree with TWG. Deterioration in projection periods, however not expected to reach famine thresholds.	<u>No</u>
Abs	Ph 3: 45% Ph 4: 40% Ph 5: 10%	Ph 3: 30% Ph 4: 50% Ph 5: 15%	4	5	Agree with both TWGs. Does not reach famine thresholds, data gaps a review is needed.	Disagree with the AFI TWG, agree with AMN TWG, and suggest a review.	<u>Yes</u>
Midi	Ph 3: 45% Ph 4: 40% Ph 5: 10%	Ph 3: 30% Ph 4: 50% Ph 5: 15%	4	5	Does not meet population minimum criteria for famine, extrapolation, however highly concerning	Does not meet population minimum criteria for famine, extrapolation, however highly concerning	<u>Yes</u>
Harad	Ph 3: 45% Ph 4: 40% Ph 5: 10%	Ph 3: 30% Ph 4: 50% Ph 5: 15%	4	5	Does not meet population minimum criteria for famine, extrapolation, however highly concerning	Does not meet population minimum criteria for famine, extrapolation, however highly concerning	<u>Yes</u>



ANNEX 2. FAMINE REVIEW COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

February 18th, 2022

Terms of Reference of the IPC Famine Review on the Yemen IPC Acute analysis, covering the period January to December 2022

I. Introduction and Purpose

A. Introduction

This document outlines the Terms of Reference that will guide the review of the IPC Acute analysis to be conducted in Yemen from January 24th 2022 to February 18th 2022. This review will consist in the following steps: (i) IPC Global Support Unit (IPC GSU) and Partners' review in preparation of the IPC Famine Review Committee (FRC)'s review; and (ii) Review by the Famine Review Committee.

The review by the IPC Famine Review Committee together with the preparation work undertaken by the IPC GSU-led multi-partner team is a neutral and independent process aiming at supporting IPC quality assurance and helping to ensure technical rigor and neutrality of the analysis. The activation of the IPC FRC provides an additional validation step before the release of Country IPC results. The FRC Review is a specific procedure activated in order to confirm or disprove Famine classifications when IPC AFI country analyses show a potential or already identified situation of Famine.

Famine Reviews are triggered when at least one of the following conditions is met: (i) the country IPC TWG reaches the conclusion that at least one area is classified in IPC AFI Phase 5 Famine or Famine Likely; or (ii) in case of a breakdown in technical consensus within the country IPC TWG regarding possible Famine or Famine Likely classification; or (iii) in case the IPC GSU, acknowledging the presence of evidence above IPC AFI Phase 5 thresholds, decides to activate the Famine Review; or (iv) in case, for similar reasons, an IPC Global Partner officially requests the IPC GSU to activate it.[3]. This specific review is activated upon request of the Technical Working Group, considering the high prevalence of population estimated to be in IPC Phase 5 (Catastrophe) and a Risk of Famine identified for those areas. A process of Review by the FRC is set up according to the IPC Famine Classification Special Additional Protocols in Manual IPC V3.1. The process is composed of two phases: Phase 1 - Preparation of the FRC review by the multi-partner team and Phase 2 - FRC Review.

The FRC review and consultations are to remain confidential and internal to the members of the IPC FRC, and are not to be publicly released, by the IPC FRC nor the IPC GSU. An IPC FRC report will be shared with the country and subsequently publicly released in the IPC website. The ownership, final decision and the public release of the IPC analysis remains the responsibility of the country's IPC Technical Working Group (TWG).

¹ AFI Analysis for the Northern areas was conducted from January 30th to February 14th and AMN for the same was from February 14th to February 18th. The AFI analysis for Southern areas started from January 24th.

² Part 2A – Function 1 Building Technical Consensus, IPC Technical Manual Version 3.1. https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/manual/IPC_Technical_Manual_3_Final.pdf

³ IPC Famine Guidance Note can be found here: https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC-Guidance-Note-on-Famine.pdf



Purpose

Phase 1 - The purpose of the **preparation of the IPC FRC Review by the IPC GSU-led multi-partner team** is to support IPC quality assurance and help ensure technical rigor and neutrality of the analysis. This exercise is done prior to FRC and provides technical inputs, structuring the information needed by the FRC to assess the validity of the analysis results in relation to Famine classifications.

Phase 2 - The IPC FRC review is an important mechanism of the global, regional and national partnership and governance structures. The committee is formed as needed and on demand and its activation represents an additional validation step before IPC results are released to clear the IPC Phase 5 classification (i.e. IPC Phase 5 Famine or Famine Likely) estimated to support quality assurance and technical consensus building. The committee is to be convened by the request of the IPC Global Support Unit (IPC GSU).

The preparation of the FRC Review will take place between February 18th and March 13th, 2022.

II. Composition of the Teams, Tools and Tasks

A. Composition

Phase 1 - Composition of the FRC Preparation Team.

The FRC Preparation Team is composed by Senior officers from the IPC GSU and IPC global partners who, to the extent possible, are not involved in the analysis process. Under the leadership of the IPC Global Programme Manager, the team will be composed as follows:

- At least 4 Food Security Officers and 2 nutrition officers from IPC Global Partners and 1 Food Security Officers and 1 Nutrition Officer from IPC GSU who are responsible for the review of analysis worksheets and completion of the Matrix for the Preparation of the FRC.
- 2 members of the IPC GSU Technical Development Team will be in stand-by to provide on demand advisory support
- 1 Food Security Officer from IPC GSU who will coordinate the FRC preparation, link with the TWG, and ensure secretariat of FRC Review and report preparation.

Phase 2 - Composition of the IPC Global Famine Review Committee (IPC FRC)

The IPC Global Famine Review Committee (IPC FRC) will be composed by five independent technical experts. Members are identified at the activation of IPC FRC and selected based on the following criteria:

- Globally recognized as leading technical food security and nutrition experts
- Neutral to the IPC outcome, who have not participated in the analysis under review

The review process may include additional consultations with TWG and key informants to increase technical understanding and background context. This can be organized by the IPC GSU and should ensure a diversity of stakeholder organization representation (National Government, Country Technical Experts, and Partner Agencies). IPC GSU serves as the chair, secretariat and coordination support to the IPC FRC.



B. Tools

Phase 1 – Tools for the Technical Support in preparation of the FRC Review.

The preparation of the FRC Review of the IPC Acute analysis to be conducted in Yemen January 24th to February 18th, will be conducted by applying the IPC FRC Matrix Tool, and IPC Famine Classification Special Additional Protocols.

Phase 2 - Tools for the IPC Global Famine Review Committee (IPC FRC)

The IPC Global Famine Review Committee will use the FRC **Matrix Tool**, which will have been partly filled by the FRC Preparation Team as a basis for the required Review, but will nonetheless have access to all IPC Analysis packages including the analysis worksheets and raw data available. The IPC FRC will be asked to summarize their feedback within the Matrix for the preparation of the FRC Review and a short report will be produced with support from the IPC GSU secretariat to summarize conclusions and recommendations.

C. Documentation needed

As part of this standard process, The Technical Working Group is requested to confidentially share key information to allow the FRC to conduct the review. This includes:

1. The worksheets of the areas requested to be reviewed by the FRC,
2. The population estimates per phase for all areas covered by the TWG analysis. These are required for the FRC to contextualize the situation of the specific areas under review into the broader IPC analysis at country level.
3. The area population, possibly indicating resident and IDP (this latest can be an estimation of actual)
4. The IPC map showing the TWG classification for all areas covered by the TWG analysis. The entire map is required for the FRC to contextualize the situation of the specific areas under review into the broader IPC analysis at country level.
4. The raw data that allowed to produce the Food Security related indicators as well as the raw data from Nutrition SMART surveys that was used in the IPC classification for the areas under review. This is of critical importance as this will allow the FRC to assess by themselves both the reliability and validity of the data that feeds the IPC.
5. The repository of all the evidence employed in the classification of the area under review. This should include all reports and evidence employed in the analysis. WASH and Health reports are also requested for these areas if available. Any additional report from any partners or from the TWG supporting better contextualization will be welcome.
6. Information regarding Humanitarian Food Assistance (actual tonnage distribution, typology of beneficiaries, targeting method, etc..).

All the documentation will be treated confidentially.



Tasks

Phase 1 – Task of the FRC Preparation Team.

This exercise consists in a technical desk review of the IPC Acute analysis conducted in Yemen from in preparation of the FRC with the purpose of assessing evidence reliability, the confidence level of the analysis and the convergence of evidence for the areas identified as most severe. The tasks to be fulfilled by the FRC Preparation Team for a selected number of areas and will consist in the review the following:

- Convergence of evidence
- Evidence Reliability
- Confidence Level of the analysis based of the evidence reliability criteria
- Decision whether an area requires further review by the FRC
- Highlight of main issues for the FRC to review

Phase 2 – Tasks of the IPC Global Famine Review Committee (IPC FRC):

During their review, the FRC will assess the time and method validity of the evidence supporting the IPC TWG classification, appreciate the interpretation and documentation of evidence and analysis and the overall conclusion on Phase classification and population figures based on the parameters presented in this guidance note. The FRC will then conclude by producing recommendation to the TWG, including confirming or disproving Famine classifications.

III. Process and Timeline

The proposed timeline for the Quality Review process is presented below.

Step	Activity description	Dates
1	IPC Yemen TWG shares with the coordinator of the FRC preparation team the worksheets, classification and population tables for the areas identified for the review. The FRC is activated and receives the completed analysis for areas to be reviewed and any other relevant documentation available from analysis, including the raw data.	February 16 th – February 20 th
2	The FRC Preparation Team conducts the desk review of the Analysis Worksheets for the selected areas, completes the FRC Matrix Tool and identifies the main areas requiring FRC attention and shared the FRC matrix with the FRC, as they get completed.	February 21 st – 24 rd
3	Teleconference are organized during this process between the FRC Preparation Team, the TWG and the FRC.	February 25 th to March 13 th
4	The FRC conclude the review and share the FRC report with the Yemen IPC TWG and the IPC Steering Committee.	March 13 th 2022



IPC

Integrated Food Security
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