

Food crisis in East Africa 2017-2023

There is a food crisis in East Africa. Climate-related droughts, combined with ongoing conflict, have left up to 20 million people hungry.

East Africa has been facing a food crisis on and off since 2011, including most recently in 2020 and 2022.

The region is experiencing a drought due to the below average rainfall during the expected rainy seasons. As crops fail and animals die, families are being forced to leave their homes to search for food and water creating a crisis.

What is causing the food crisis in East Africa?

Rain is usually expected in the East African region in Spring and Summer, but between March and May 2022 East Africa saw **one of its driest seasons in 40 years.**

Recurring droughts and erratic rainfall have led to widespread crop failure and death of livestock which the pastoral communities rely on, for food and livelihoods.

Now the war in Ukraine is also contributing to the food crisis in the region. Food supplies from Ukraine are being cut off and causing an increase in food and energy prices means people cannot buy staples such as bread or fuel.

How many people are affected by the food crisis in East Africa?

Almost 20 million people, including children are facing severe hunger or malnourishment in East Africa. Chronic water shortages and now rising food and energy prices are pushing families to the brink of survival.

Famine is a technical classification that defines a catastrophic level of food insecurity that results in people dying from not having enough food to eat.

Acute food insecurity is defined when people are unable to eat enough food and that puts their lives or livelihoods in immediate danger.

What is happening in Ethiopia?

Little to no rain in recent months has decimated crops and livestock, leading to severe food and water shortages in the region. Covid-19 pandemic and local instability is also contributing to hunger. About 7.2 million people in Ethiopia are **severely food insecure** due to the drought.

Following four consecutive failed rainy seasons since 2020, Ethiopia is now facing an extended drought. Pastoral communities who rely on livestock farming are being affected the most. Children's malnutrition is worsening as food prices are rising due to the war in Ukraine.

Malnutrition rates over the past year have risen by 64%, with an increase of 43% between January and April 2022.