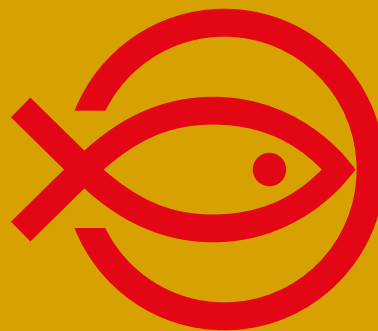


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GLOBAL **FOOD CRISIS**

CALL FROM 20 BURNING PLATFORMS WORLDWIDE



[Foto: Jakob Dall]

Poverty and hunger have been on the rise during the pandemic, and so have the subsequent consequences of climate change, conflicts, continued democratic regression, and restrictions on civic and humanitarian space. The multiple crises have severely increased the susceptibility and shortages of global food systems and supply chains impacting food production, distribution, and consumption.

In a world on fire, it can be hard to find hope. With this report DanChurchAid wants to challenge that premise. The DanChurchAid DNA, embedded in the legacy of one hundred years of relief work, is to not give up. We want to inspire action.

The report is a call from 20 DanChurchAid country offices around the globe. It gives an understanding of the impact on the ground of the global food crisis and provides a snapshot of burning platforms.

There is a massive and increasing demand for our support and engagement with local actors in an increasingly complex world.



Birgitte Øvist-Sørensen

General Secretary, DanChurchAid

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The number of acute food insecure people worldwide has increased to **345 million** in **82** countries.

The conflict in Ukraine will plunge an additional **95 million** people into extreme poverty, and **50 million** into severe hunger.

The Horn of Africa is experiencing one of the worst hunger crises of the last **70** years.

More than **37 million** people are facing acute hunger, with **7 million** children under the age of five acutely malnourished in the region.

INTRODUCTION

Worldwide we are experiencing a global food crisis. The causes cover hyperinflation and rising commodity prices fueled by the war in Ukraine, environmental-related shocks such as floodings and droughts driven by climate change, escalating unrest and conflicts due to scarce natural resources, and a severe risk of people being forced to leave their homes, thus becoming part of the 100 million people globally on the move.

The global food crisis that is also rooted in failure of politics and governance at the national and global levels has been partially made worse by the growing number of food trade restrictions put in place by countries with a goal of increasing domestic supply and reducing prices.

Rising food prices have a greater impact on people in low-income countries, since they spend a larger share of their income on food than people in high-income countries. At the time, the global aid funding available to address the escalating food crisis has stalled.

The consequences – as shown in this report – are increasing levels of poverty, inequality, hunger, social unrest, and new conflicts over scarce resources and displacements exposing marginalized groups including women and children to food insecurity.

The report is based on a survey conducted among 20 DanChurchAid country offices in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. While global events and trends may form a common background to the food crisis around the world, the most urgent issues and the best solutions vary from country to country.

There is no quick fix solution. The food crisis requires a tailored and contextualized response.

This call from 20 countries speaks to the urgency of understanding the consequences and simultaneously addressing short-term humanitarian needs and acute food insecurity as well as long-term development.

CONCLUSIONS

Situation reports from DanChurchAid's 20 country offices on the ground in Africa, The Middle East, and Asia conclude the urgent need for the Danish government to respond to the multiple crises that right now drive millions of people into food insecurity, poverty, and hunger.

The main needs are:

1. Innovation of food systems

We urgently need to find ways to produce and secure access to enough food for a growing population without negatively impacting the climate and environment. We must strengthen food security and independence from imported food and global markets.

Therefore, Danish development aid must promote **disruption of existing food systems**, stimulate

innovative approaches and solutions, **up-scale local and climate-resilient** and low-carbon agriculture, and food production.

In addition, Denmark must promote the **right to food** for everyone and ensure that local communities are part of the decision-making and food systems. Finally, there is an urgent need to ensure that gender equality and equal opportunities are considered in the value chain from production to consumption.

2. Multistakeholder partnerships

We urgently need to **move beyond traditional silos** and combine immediate humanitarian assistance, long-term development, peacebuilding, and advocacy efforts to create sustainable and lasting change. A **multi-mandated nexus approach** creates coherence and synergy and

meets people's short and long-term needs as they evolve. Moreover, the approach enables effective navigation in and response to shifting contexts and situations, i.e., from acute crisis to sustainable development or the reverse moving from development programming into crisis response.

Therefore, Danish development aid must promote and strengthen **partnerships between civil society** - including secular- and faith-based organizations -, **research institutions**, and the **private sector** to generate green and sustainable food solutions that can be taken to scale.

3. Climate action – now

We urgently need to address the climate crisis and act both to **reduce emissions, adapt to the consequences**

of climate change, and **assist the people affected** the most. If not mitigated, the climate, environment, and biodiversity crises will challenge life as we know it, exacerbate food insecurity and fragility, and trigger large-scale displacement and migration. Climate change is affecting the poorest the hardest.

Therefore, Danish development aid must maintain the commitment to scale up the support for **climate adaptation** and continue to push other countries to follow.

Also, we must take full climate responsibility for **climate-induced loss and damage** and assist people and communities facing the effects of climate-related disasters.

A CALL FROM BURNING PLATFORMS

From Ukraine to Uganda and from Mali to Myanmar the current global food crisis has severe negative impact on the most vulnerable people. The 20 DCA offices in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia report on hunger, **food insecurity, conflict intensification**, increasing inequality, **migration, refugees on the move** - and in addition the consequences of the escalating **climate change**.





 **Ukraine**

 **Lebanon**

 **Syria**

 **Palestine**

 **Iraq**

 **Libya**

 **Mali**

 **South Sudan**

 **Ethiopia**

 **Central African Republic**

 **Uganda**

 **Kenya**

 **DR Congo**


 **Zambia**

 **Malawi**

 **Zimbabwe**

 **Nepal**

 **Bangladesh**

 **Myanmar**

 **Cambodia**

FOOD INSECURITY

The rampant inflation on food, fuel and fertilizer hits developing countries with hyperinflation-like increases of up to several hundred percent, according to the World Bank. Particularly severely affected are countries with heavy dependence on wheat and cooking oil imports from Ukraine and Russia, such as Zimbabwe and Lebanon. (See the table on the inflation rate, page 12)

According to DCA **Ethiopia** inflation on food, fuel and fertilizer has severely weakened the population's purchasing power and access to food and has created difficulties for farmers to produce food. In July 2022 food prices had come up with 35.5 percent compared to July 2021. In **Syria** food prices had risen by 39.1 percent in July 2022 compared to July 2021. DCA **Malawi** reports that a 19.1 percent inflation in June 2022 and doubled priced fertilizer has led to general food insecurity.

In **Myanmar**, according to DCA Myanmar, farmers are restricted by the military regime to only harvest their

crops with military permission and to handover fifty percent of the harvest to the military.

DCA **Zimbabwe** reports that people living in urban areas are most affected by the food crisis as they are dependent on buying food at the markets. Smallholder farmers in rural areas have possibilities of producing and providing for themselves.

Food insecurity most seriously affects the poorest and marginalized people. Due to gender roles and for some countries patriarchal norms, especially women and children are vulnerable and exposed to food insecurity. Several DanChurchAid offices report the risk of an increase in gender-based violence and abuse.

In **Uganda**, the situation for children and lactating mothers has deteriorated so badly that more than 91,000 children under the age of five and 9,500 pregnant or lactating women are acutely malnourished and need treatment. In **Zimbabwe** female headed and child headed

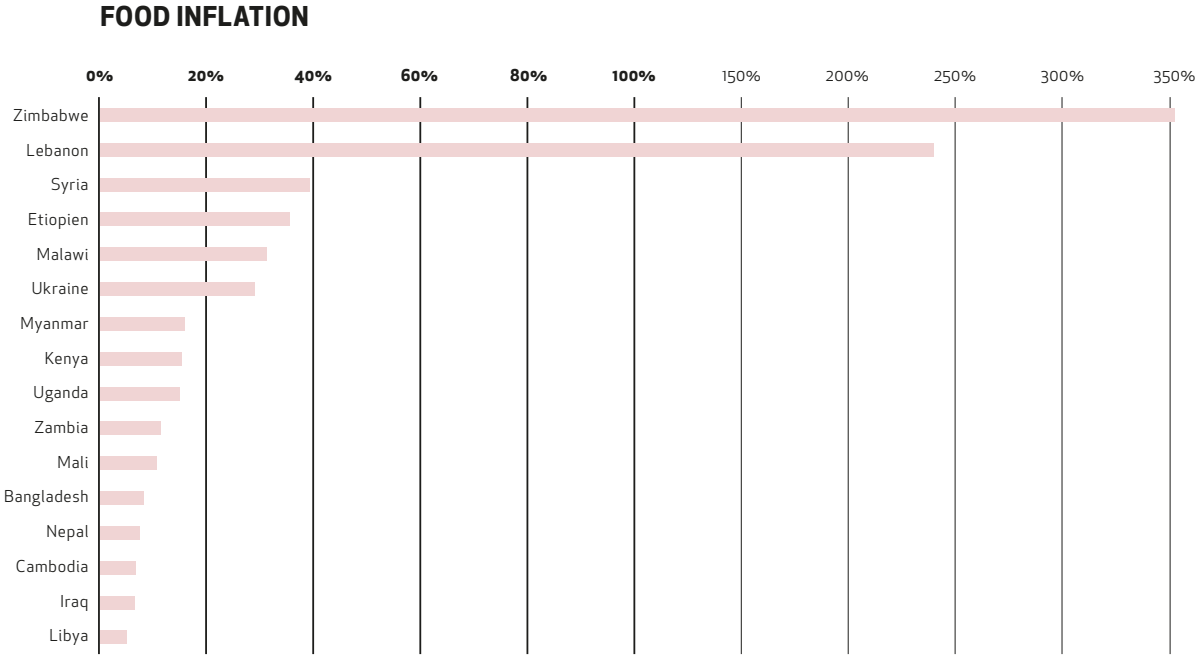
households are under extreme pressure and risking negative coping mechanisms as e.g. prostitution.

According to DCA **Palestine** and DCA **Syria**, the strategy for many vulnerable families is to reduce the number of daily meals, and to eat lower quality or less nutritious food, which affects people's health. Some have stopped buying fruit and meat all together. Another strategy is to buy food with borrowed money, thus get into debt. In **Syria**, the food crisis has also led to an increase in early marriages, child labor, gender-based violence – and reduced access to education. Furthermore, this has affected protection negatively and has worsened the risks of unsafe and unwanted pregnancies.

Also, countries not very affected by the wheat and cooking oil crisis, experience high prices on fuel and fertilizer, affecting transport costs and agricultural production. Fuel prices have doubled in **Cambodia** and increased with 50 percent in Nepal. The cost of food in Cambodia quadrupled between January and March

this year, and in **Nepal** food prices have risen by at least 20 percent, reported by DCA offices in the two Asian countries. In **Nepal**, the high prices have pushed one million people into general poverty in addition to the 6.7 million people who are already poor and now experiencing even harsher living conditions. The Nepalese government has implemented a rationing plan for fuel consumption and restricted imports of some goods.

In **Cambodia** household debt has doubled in five years (starting before the COVID-19 pandemic) and is expected to continue due to the increasing food prices. The agriculture sector in **Malawi** suffers from up to the doubled price on fertilizer, which has led to food insecurity. And according to DCA **Mali** prices on locally grown millet and sorghum have this summer come up with more than 60 percent, increasing incidences of malnutrition.



Countries with no available data: Palestine, South Sudan, Central African Republic, and Democratic Republic of Congo

Source: Trading Economics, June/July 2022

- >> More than half of all families in Lebanon do no longer make ends meet, due to rising costs. These households do not have enough food, children are not in school, people are not able to commute to work. There are cuts in the delivery of basic services such as trash collecting, water, power, communication and internet.

Mike Bonke, DCA Country Director in Lebanon

ESCALATING CLIMATE CHANGE

The climate crisis is a recurring factor across the 20 countries and exacerbates all the other crises, not least the current global food crisis.

This is particularly evident in **The Horn of Africa**, where more than 37 million people face food insecurity, including approximately seven million children under the age of five acutely malnourished. The rainy season this year was one of the driest in 70 years, comparable to the Horn of Africa famines of 1984 and 2011 that killed hundreds of thousands of people. The massive drought affects up to 70 percent of the agricultural land, thus impacting the harvest severely for the fourth season in a row.

DCA **Ethiopia** refer to a recent announcement from Ethiopian officials of more than 20 million people being in acute food insecurity due to the combination of climate -, food -, energy crises and unrest in parts of the country. According to DCA **Kenya** the main challenge in

the country is the prolonged and extreme drought – more urgent and challenging than inflation and increasing prices on imported foods, fuel and fertilizer leading to reducing GDP growth and increasing poverty.

Countries not located on the Horn of Africa face other climate related issues affecting food security negatively. In **Zambia** farmers in some areas experience increased frequency and severe dry spells combined with poor soil. In other areas, the crops are seriously affected by floods. **South Sudan** is increasingly suffering from the consequences of heavy rainfalls and floodings washing away crops and livestock. As climate change is disrupting food production, affecting food quality and increasing food loss and waste, most countries are risking further dependency on imported food.

Also, **Nepal, Cambodia, Uganda, Mali**, and **Zimbabwe** experience severe consequences of climate change pushing more people into the risk of poverty.

- >> Shortage of food and drinking water is a major concern in drought-affected areas, leading to displacement, loss of livelihoods and devastating consequences for women and children, heightening the risk of gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, female genital mutilation, and hampering children's access to education.

Anne Hoff, DCA Country Director in Ethiopia.

INTENSIFICATION OF CONFLICT & SOCIAL UNREST

Existing wars and internal conflicts complicate building sustainable agriculture and food systems, thus amplifying the consequences of the food crisis. The rising prices are also causing new conflicts and social unrest. In general conflict and instability put countries in reverse gear, where development gains are destroyed, and livelihoods shattered.

The protracted conflict and economic crisis have left people in **Syria** increasingly unable to afford the basic needs. According to DCA **Syria** family expenditures now exceed income by 50%, making families more reliant on aid and drawing people towards camps, where there is more consistent access to basic services and humanitarian assistance.

DCA **CAR** reports that the cost of living is rising every day, and fuel is so limited that a large group of people providing for their families as day-to-day sellers of foods

and other goods have difficulties reaching markets and customers. The scarceness of food creates a risk of further unrest.

As per DCA **Mali** the natural resources are scarce and the needs among civilians and armed groups are significant. This accelerates further marginalization of the most vulnerable groups and increases internal conflicts, which weakens the whole society.

In **Iraq** exploding gas and electricity prices are causing social unrest and inequality, and the risk of increased urbanization and tension between communities all searching for access to waterways and arable land. According to DCA **Iraq** also increased activity by ISIS is being reported. As per DCA **Palestine** the consequences of the food crisis have generally escalated the level of conflict.

- >> The consequences of the current food crisis are rapidly rising social inequality, which is a significant driver of conflict in Iraq. Also, food insecurity pushes the risk of increased urbanization as desperate people flock there, and increased tension between communities already fighting between each other for access to waterways and arable land.

Knud Andersen, DCA Country Director in Iraq.



[Foto: Jjumba Martin]

MILLIONS OF REFUGEES ON THE MOVE

In countries hosting a vast number of refugees, the food crisis is a double challenge; severe food insecurity and resistance towards refugees.

Uganda host more than 1.5 million refugees and asylum seekers, a number still increasing due to the refugee flows from the **Democratic Republic of Congo** and **South Sudan**.

In **Bangladesh**, the situation is particularly critical in the poor district of Cox's Bazar. The citizens of the community have lost much of their land and forest to

refugee camps housing one million Rohingya refugees from Myanmar. According to DCA **Bangladesh** the current food crisis has pressured the host community and caused a risk of rising resistance against refugees.

In Iraq internal conflicts - due to more than 13 million people currently in moderate or severe food insecurity – are affecting the sustainable return of refugees in post-conflict **Iraq**. According to DCA **Iraq** this can lead to displacements on a larger scale than ISIS invasion seen in the past.

THE AID RESPONSE OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

The UN General Assembly has called for approaching the critical food crisis and food security in general as “part of a broader multilateral agenda.” However, despite the UN call for action and emergency appeals, the global aid funding available to address the escalating food crisis has stalled and cannot meet the needs.

The timing of the global food crisis comes when several western countries, including Denmark, divert development budgets to cover the expenses of Ukrainian refugees and humanitarian aid in Ukraine.

Several DCA country offices confirm that they are facing aid cuts in 2022, including DCA Syria that reports

e.g. in May this year only meeting 8.1 percent of the required funding, while others have not yet experienced international donors and organizations cutting down. The cuts in aid are not necessarily caused by the Ukrainian war but are also due to other priorities.

Bangladesh is facing 70 percent aid cuts in 2022. Several NGOs are closing partially or entirely, such as United Nations shutting down projects to retain staff. DCA Bangladesh is uncertain about funding, already facing current challenges as partners have difficulty disbursing funds due to Ukraine.

With every crisis, like the war in Ukraine, the Yemen war, and the Syrian crisis, **Palestine**, as a long-standing

humanitarian country, is less of a priority for the world, according to DCA Palestine. Furthermore, rising prices of food and supply chain challenges have eroded the aid efforts, not least the emergency aid.

In a report on decreased humanitarian aid by the United Nations, two-thirds of major United Nations programs have been scaled down or closed, with deep cuts made to food aid, water, health care, and relief services for people fleeing violence.

The money does not follow the same needs due to price increases, and e.g., in **Uganda**, World Food Programme has reduced their monthly emergency aid

and food rations by 40 percent.

Due to the acute food crisis, there is an increasing demand for short-term humanitarian aid at the expense of long-term resilience.

So across hard-hit countries **like Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, South Sudan, Zimbabwe, Syria, and Iraq**, the international response to the food crisis is emergency aid to support the most vulnerable local areas and populations. As part of the international response, DanChurchAid provides cash to help people in need and keep them from going into debt to afford food. This has proven one of the best ways to help people afford food. ■

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 20 DCA COUNTRY OFFICES

DanChurchAid country offices from 20 burning platforms worldwide call on the international community to rethink food systems. There is a need to promote sustainable agriculture and low-carbon food production and provide short-term humanitarian support to the most vulnerable and acute food insecure people.

Also, there is a general urge for international support to remain flexible and adapt to the expected sudden changes. However, the specific needs and recommendations differ across the world according to the perspective of the dire situation.

DCA Ethiopia suggests promoting water catchment schemes and climate-resilient crops like quinoa, mung

beans, and sorghum. Also, a strong focus on upscaling local climate resilient food systems, boosting the local economy, and green jobs, will decrease the dependency on imports of e.g., wheat.

According to **DCA Malawi**, the international community must strengthen the marginalized women economically, as they are strongly affected by the increased food prices. This will also alleviate gender-based violence, as self-reliance promotes independence and thus reduces the likelihood of violence. In addition, international actors, including the Danish government, should identify the root causes of food insecurity and support policy measures that protect poor and vulnerable people and their rights and access to food.

DCA Uganda recommends focusing on innovative farming methods, including agroecology, and advocating for increased access to land for vulnerable groups, especially women, to produce enough food for consumption and surplus for sale.

DCA Kenya suggests investing in the resilience and self-reliance of local, biodiverse food systems as a scalable strategy gaining science-based momentum globally. Investing in water systems to support crop production and climate-friendly solutions to combating food waste is crucial. This will minimize the risk of small farmers losing their livelihood and avoid dependence on international market fluctuations. According to **DCA Kenya**, it will also contribute to reducing carbon

footprints, as these will shorten the value chain and lessen the need for transporting goods.

Likewise, **DCA Zambia** recommends support for climate-resilient agriculture production to strengthen resilience and ensure sustainability. Post-covid and the Ukraine war should be used to see opportunities to promote local, sustainable, and robust food production.

According to **DCA Iraq**, the international community, including the Danish government, should not only have a singular focus on the war in Ukraine. Therefore, the international community should begin to address the negative consequences of the war, which affects a more significant part of the world's population outside the borders of Europe. ■



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