

## **SDG 2: No Hunger**

### **UN agencies call for urgent action to avert famine risk in 20 ‘hunger hotspots’**

UN News (Mar. 23, 2021)

Yemen, South Sudan and northern Nigeria top the list, according to the Hunger Hotspots Report published by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP).

#### **Race against the clock**

The partners said more than 34 million people worldwide are already facing emergency levels of acute hunger, meaning they are just a step away from starvation.

“The magnitude of suffering is alarming. It is incumbent upon all of us to act now and to act fast to save lives, safeguard livelihoods and prevent the worst situation”, said FAO Director-General Qu Dongyu.

“In many regions, the planting season has just started or is about to start. We must run against the clock and not let this opportunity to protect, stabilize and even possibly increase local food production, slip away.”

Yemen, South Sudan and northern Nigeria top the list of the 20 countries, and are facing catastrophic levels of acute hunger. Some families in areas in South Sudan and Yemen are already experiencing starvation and death, or are at risk of starvation.

While most of the affected countries are in Africa, the report said hunger is set to rise steeply in most regions of the world.

#### **Catastrophe unfolding**

Several factors are behind the projected rise in acute food insecurity, with nations facing one or a mix of key drivers that include conflict, the COVID-19 pandemic, climate extremes and locust outbreaks. Increasingly constrained humanitarian access to people in need is another concern.

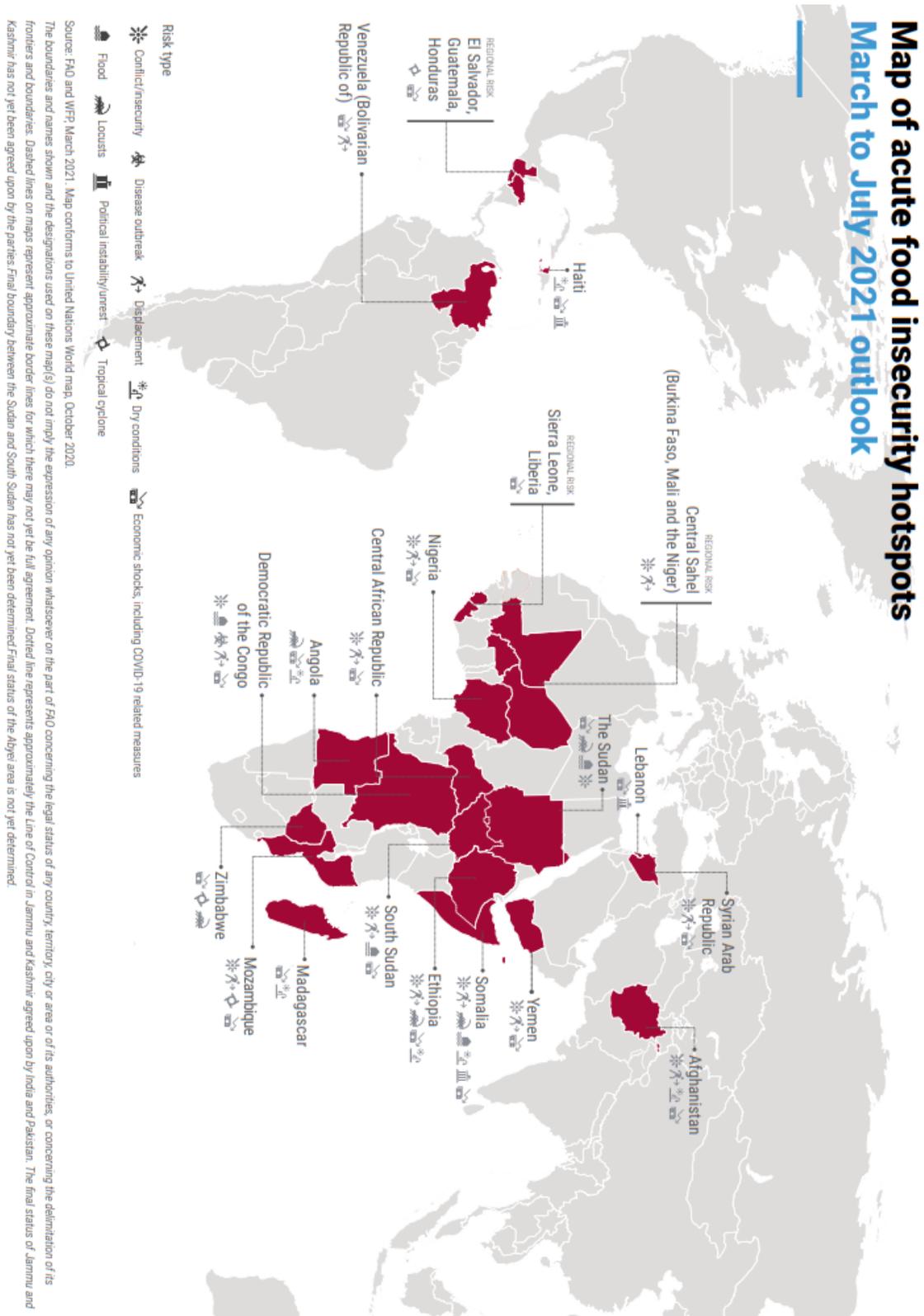
“We are seeing a catastrophe unfold before our very eyes. Famine – driven by conflict, and fuelled by climate shocks and the COVID-19 hunger pandemic – is knocking on the door for millions of families”, said David Beasley, WFP Executive Director.

#### **Three urgent priorities**

“We urgently need three things to stop millions from dying of starvation: the fighting has to stop, we must be allowed access to vulnerable communities to provide life-saving help, and above all we need donors to step up with the US\$ 5.5 billion we are asking for this year,” he added.

The funding will be used for humanitarian food assistance, cash and emergency livelihoods interventions, in line with an appeal launched earlier this month by the two UN agencies.

The report also recommends critical actions in each “hunger hotspot” to address current and future needs, such as scaling-up food and nutrition assistance, providing drought-tolerant seeds, rehabilitating water-harvesting structures and introducing cash-for-work schemes.



UN News. 2021. “UN agencies call for urgent action to avert famine risk in 20 ‘hunger hotspots.’” <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/03/1088022> (accessed November 10, 2021).