

## Gaza and Haiti on the brink of famine

### Why in news?

Gaza and Haiti are facing imminent famine due to severe hunger caused by conflict and crisis.

### What is the status of food security in Gaza and Haiti?

- **Gaza food crisis-** It is due to [ongoing war](#) between Israel and Hamas in Gaza, nearly every resident is struggling for food, with half the population facing severe hunger soon.



- As per report from the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), famine could strike Gaza between mid-March and May if hostilities continue and essential supplies are not provided.
- **Haiti food insecurity-** It is due to the [crisis](#) caused by criminal gangs, approximately 1.4 million people are on the brink of famine, with over 4 million in need of food assistance.

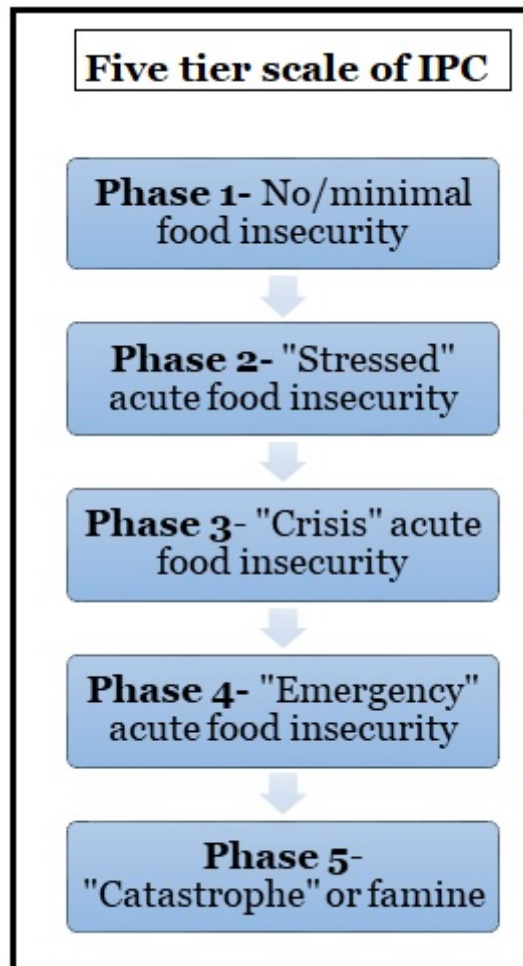


- United Nations warns Haiti as catastrophic hunger has been recorded for first time.

*Operation Indravati was launched by India to evacuate its citizens stranded in war-torn Haiti*

### **What is famine?**

- Famine occurs when a country has such a severe food shortage that its population faces acute malnutrition, starvation, or death.
- **Classification-** It is decided using a UN scale called the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC).
- **Five tier scale-** The IPC utilizes a five-tier scale to assess food access and hunger levels.



- **Famine-** It is the *highest phase* (Phase 5), is declared when an entire population or subgroup faces absolute food inaccessibility, leading to potential short-term death.
- **Criteria for famine-** To officially declare as famine 3 things need to happen in a specific geographic area
  - At least 20% of households face an extreme lack of food
  - At least 30% of children suffer acute malnutrition
  - Two adults or four children per 10,000 people die each day "due to outright starvation or to the interaction of malnutrition and disease".
- **Famine declaration-** A declaration of famine would be made by top United Nations officials based on the IPC criteria.
- **Risk of famine-** Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Pakistan, Somalia, Syria and Yemen are at the risk of famine.

*Famine was previously declared by IPC in Somalia (2011) and South Sudan (2017)*

## Factors of famine

- **Hunger**- It is described as the sensation when the body needs food, it becomes a concern when people lack access to adequate nutrition over time.
- **Malnutrition**- It is a medical condition from not receiving proper calories, leading to health issues.
- Severe acute malnutrition is critical, especially in children.
- **Starvation**- It refers to extreme suffering or death due to no food intake, leading to the body consuming its own resources, ultimately causing organ failure and death without intervention.
- **Vulnerable population**- Children younger than 5, pregnant and breastfeeding women, the elderly and people with underlying health conditions are most at risk from malnutrition.
- In acute crises like that seen in Gaza, malnutrition affects the youngest children first.

### What are the common causes of famine?

- **Conflict**- It often leads to population displacements and disrupts people's traditional ways of dealing with food scarcity.
- **Natural hazards**- Events such as drought, flooding, and cyclones, as well as human and animal diseases and crop pests, affect food access and availability.
- **Decline in economy**- It greatly impacts access to food, through disruptions to food trade, food price inflation, and currency volatilities.
- **Human epidemics**- Diseases such as measles outbreaks present a major challenge to food security and nutrition.
- **Animal diseases**- It can also affect the food availability of households whose livelihoods depend on their livestock.
- **Pests**- Desert Locusts or Fall Army Worm, can devastate crops and cause higher levels of acute food insecurity.
- **Inadequate humanitarian response**-When a shock occurs, and the humanitarian response is not sufficient, well-coordinated, or fast enough, the affected populations can only cope for a short period

### What lies ahead?

- Famine declaration by UN officials carries no binding obligations on UN members or states,
- The famine declaration serves to focus global attention on the problem.

### Quick facts

#### Integrated Food Security Phase Classification

- **Launch year**- In 2004 during Somalia's famine by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization's Food Security Analysis Unit (FSAU)
- IPC is a coalition of 15 global organizations and charities.
- **About**-It is an innovative multi-partner initiative for improving food security and nutrition analysis and decision-making.
- It is a standardised scale that integrates food security, nutrition and livelihood information into a statement about the nature and severity of a crisis and implications for strategic response

## References

1. [Indian Express- Gaza and Haiti on the brink of famine](#)
2. [BBC- Famine in Gaza and Sudan](#)

