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Haiti

Hunger threatens more than 4 million Haitians

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“Haiti forms part of a ‘ring of fire’ encircling the globe where climate shocks, conflict, COVID-19, and rising costs are pushing vulnerable communities over the edge”, Pierre Honnorat, WFP (World Food Programme) representative in Haiti, told a news conference.

Inflation, conflicts marked by criminal groups and disasters caused by natural phenomena are compounded by persistent political instability, which has increased since the assassination of then President Jovenel Moïse on 7 July 2021.

According to the latest estimates of the WFP's Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) - which ranks the severity and extent of food insecurity and malnutrition - on a scale of five, some 4.5 million Haitians, or more than 40% of the country's 11 million inhabitants, are hungry. And of these, it is estimated that more than 1.3 million will be in the emergency phase of the Integrated Food Security Phase (IPC) classification between March and June 2022.

IPC Phase 4 results in extremely low household food consumption due to reduced access to staple foods, as prices rise and incomes remain very low.

For some families, the current economic crisis is characterised by a weakening of the currency (the gourde) against the US dollar, rampant inflation and rising fuel prices in recent months.

The "Ukraine crisis" [Putin's Russian-led war] may soon worsen Haiti's food security as world prices for the food the country must import rise.

In addition, the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, such as droughts, floods and storms, are having a detrimental effect on crops, infrastructure and agricultural assets, affecting the livelihoods of rural populations.

According to the National Food Security Coordination, the monthly cost of the basic minimum food basket (rice, wheat flour, maize, beans, sugar and vegetable oil) has risen from US\$20 to US\$30. In two years, the price of bread has increased fivefold.

In parts of the south of the island, hit by a powerful earthquake on 14 August, and where the emergency response was limited, the situation has deteriorated. The north of the country, covering only 27,750 square kilometres, is suffering the consequences of heavy flooding in late January.

In response to the humanitarian emergency, the WFP said it expects to help 1.7 million people this year, after successfully providing food and other assistance to 1.3 million Haitians in 2021.

The UN agency is also undertaking initiatives to increase people's resilience and social protection, with activities that can provide some income and reduce the effects and risks of disasters among communities.

Assets that can be mobilised for communities include road rehabilitation, soil and water conservation, irrigation canals and complementary activities to strengthen local food production, agricultural practices, nutrition and gender reduction, WFP said. [\[1\]](#)

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Adapted from Inter Press 22 March 2022

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[1] In fact, the central issue in this hyper-crisis remains the implementation of an effective democratic and shared ownership of assets by communities in the regions. (A l'Encontre)