

# 2018

Synopsis

# GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX

FORCED MIGRATION AND HUNGER

October 2018



The 2018 Global Hunger Index (GHI) report—the thirteenth in an annual series—presents a multidimensional measure of global, regional, and national hunger. The latest data available show that while the world has made progress in reducing hunger since 2000, we still have a long way to go. Levels of hunger are still *serious* or *alarming* in 51 countries and *extremely alarming* in one country. This year’s report focuses on hunger and the rising levels of forced migration—two interlinked challenges that require long-term action and political solutions.

# THE GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX

The GHI scores are based on a formula that captures three dimensions of hunger—insufficient caloric intake, child undernutrition, and child mortality—using four component indicators:

- **UNDERNOURISHMENT:** the share of the population that is undernourished, reflecting insufficient caloric intake
- **CHILD WASTING:** the share of children under the age of five who are wasted (low weight-for-height), reflecting acute undernutrition
- **CHILD STUNTING:** the share of children under the age of five who are stunted (low height-for-age), reflecting chronic undernutrition
- **CHILD MORTALITY:** the mortality rate of children under the age of five

Data on these indicators come from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, the World Bank, Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), and the United Nations Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UN IGME). The 2018 GHI is calculated for 119 countries for which data are available and reflects data from 2013 to 2017.

The GHI ranks countries on a 100-point scale, with 0 being the best score (no hunger) and 100 being the worst, although neither of these extremes is reached in actuality. Values less than 10.0 reflect *low* hunger; values from 10.0 to 19.9 reflect *moderate* hunger; values from 20.0 to 34.9 indicate *serious* hunger; values from 35.0 to 49.9 are *alarming*; and values of 50.0 or more are *extremely alarming* (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1 NUMBER OF COUNTRIES BY HUNGER LEVEL



Source: Authors.

# RANKINGS AND TRENDS

The 2018 Global Hunger Index (GHI) indicates that the level of hunger and undernutrition worldwide falls within the *serious* category, at a value of 20.9, down from 29.2 in 2000 (Figure 2). Despite this improvement, the question remains whether the world will achieve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2, which aims to end hunger, ensure food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture, by 2030. GHI projections show that at the pace of hunger reduction observed since 2000, approximately 50 countries will fail to reach *low* hunger levels as defined by the GHI Severity Scale by 2030; 79 countries have failed to reach that designation according to the 2018 GHI. Given the gains that have already been made, we know significant progress is possible, but the goal of achieving zero hunger will be reached by 2030 only with increased efforts and innovative approaches.

## The Regions

Hunger remains *serious* in South Asia and Africa south of the Sahara (with GHI scores of 30.5 and 29.4, respectively). In both regions the rates of undernourishment, child stunting, child wasting, and child mortality remain unacceptably high. In particular, South Asia has the highest child stunting and child wasting rates of any region, followed by Africa south of the Sahara. In terms of undernourishment and child mortality, Africa south of the Sahara has the highest rates, followed by South Asia.

In contrast, GHI scores in East and Southeast Asia, the Near East and North Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States range from 7.3 to 13.2, indicating *low* or *moderate* hunger levels. Yet even those regions include countries where hunger and undernutrition rates are *serious* or *alarming*.

## The Countries

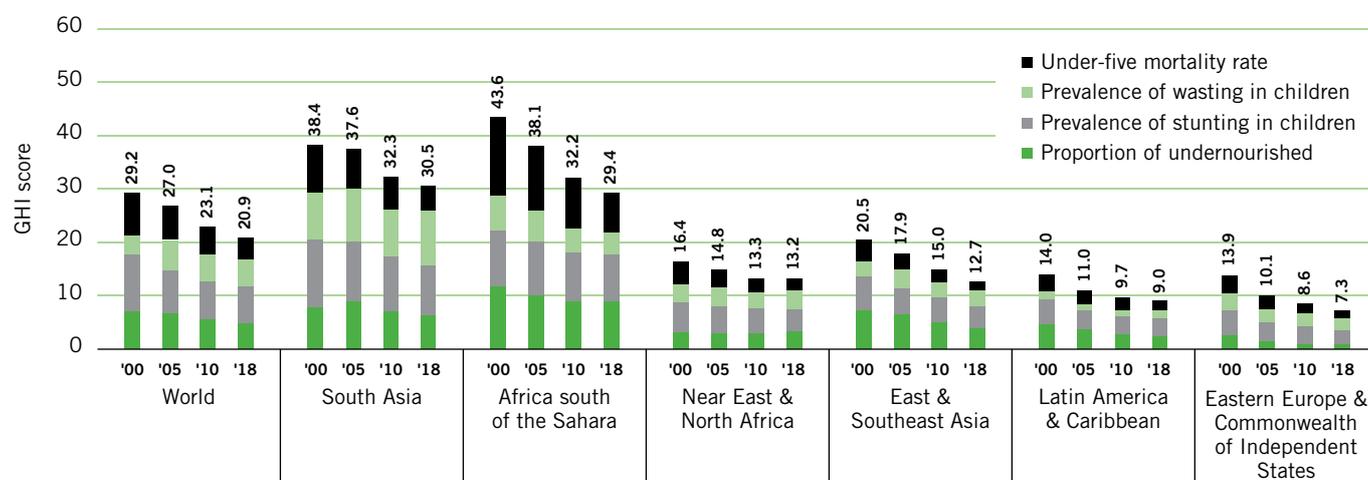
According to the 2018 GHI, hunger is *extremely alarming* in one country, the Central African Republic (CAR), which has experienced instability, sectarian violence, and civil war since 2012. Hunger levels are *alarming* in six countries: Chad, Haiti, Madagascar, Sierra Leone, Yemen, and Zambia. Forty-five countries out of 119 countries that were ranked have *serious* levels of hunger.

GHI scores could not be calculated for several countries because data were not available for all four GHI indicators. Yet the hunger and undernutrition situations in seven of these countries—Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Libya, Somalia, South Sudan, and Syria—give cause for significant concern. In each of these seven countries, violent conflict, political unrest, and/or extreme poverty have precipitated substantial flows of forced migration, which is closely associated with food insecurity.

Countries in all regions of the world exhibit wide variations in hunger and undernutrition levels within their borders. For example, Latin America has one of the lowest regional hunger levels. However, stunting levels in Guatemala’s departments range from 25 percent to a staggering 70 percent. In many countries, the areas with the lowest stunting levels are predominantly urban areas, such as national capitals, which are outliers relative to other parts of the country. In other countries, there are areas where stunting is exceptionally high relative to the country as a whole. Recognizing the nature of the hunger and undernutrition challenges facing individual areas within a country can help to better tailor interventions and policies to meet those areas’ needs.

In order to delve more deeply into national averages, the 2018 GHI report takes a closer look at the hunger and nutrition situations of two countries—Bangladesh and Ethiopia—which have *serious* levels of hunger but have achieved notable progress through a range of policies and programs.

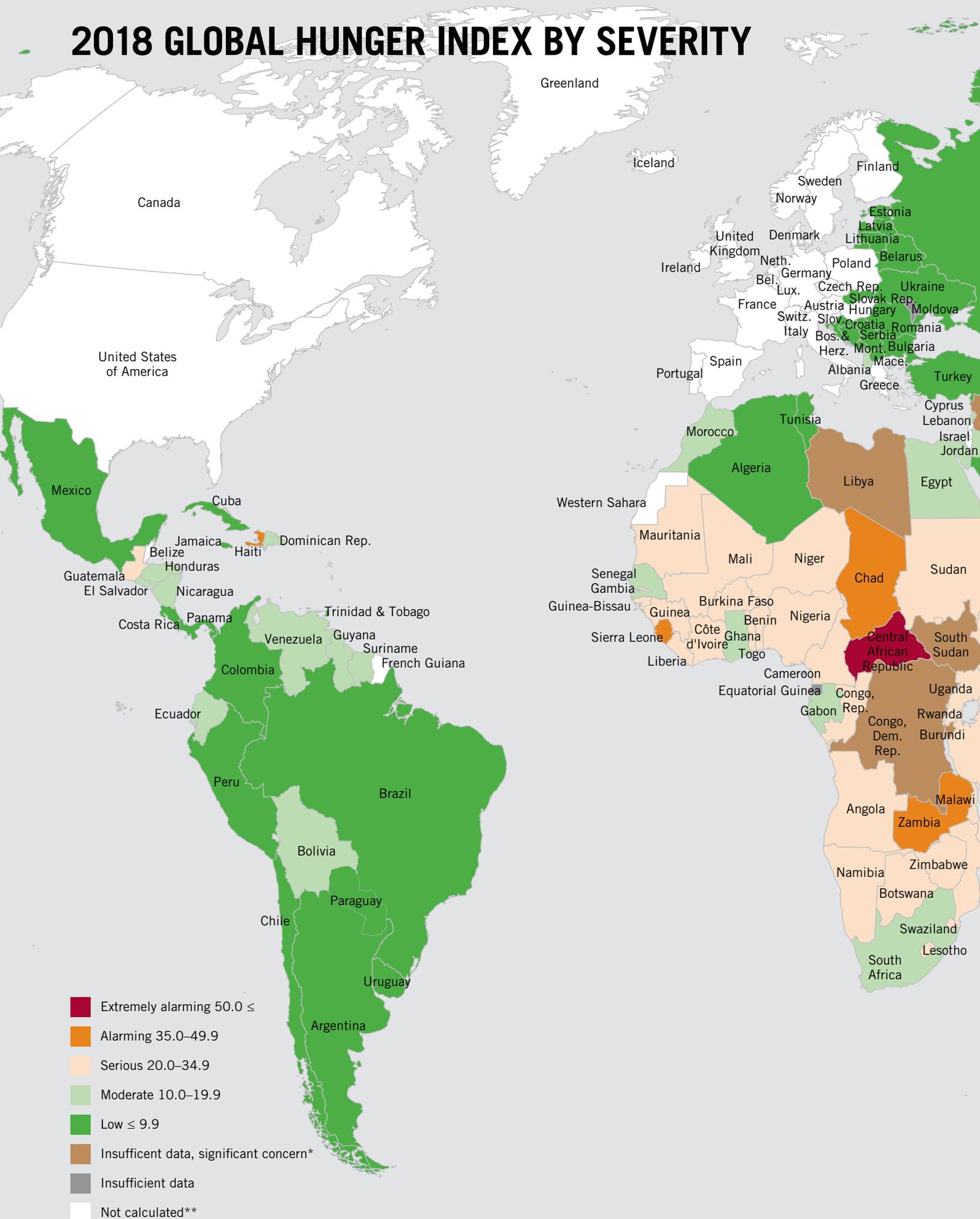
FIGURE 2 GLOBAL AND REGIONAL 2000, 2005, 2010, AND 2018 GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX SCORES, WITH CONTRIBUTION OF COMPONENTS



Source: Authors.

Note: See Appendix B in the GHI 2018 full report for data sources. The regional and global GHI scores are calculated using regional and global aggregates for each indicator and the formula described in Appendix A. The regional and global aggregates for each indicator are calculated as population-weighted averages, using the indicator values reported in Appendix C. For countries lacking undernourishment data, provisional estimates provided by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) were used in the calculation of aggregates only, but are not reported in Appendix C.

# 2018 GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX BY SEVERITY



\*See Box 2.1 in the GHI 2018 full report for details.

\*\*See Chapter 1 in the GHI 2018 full report for details.



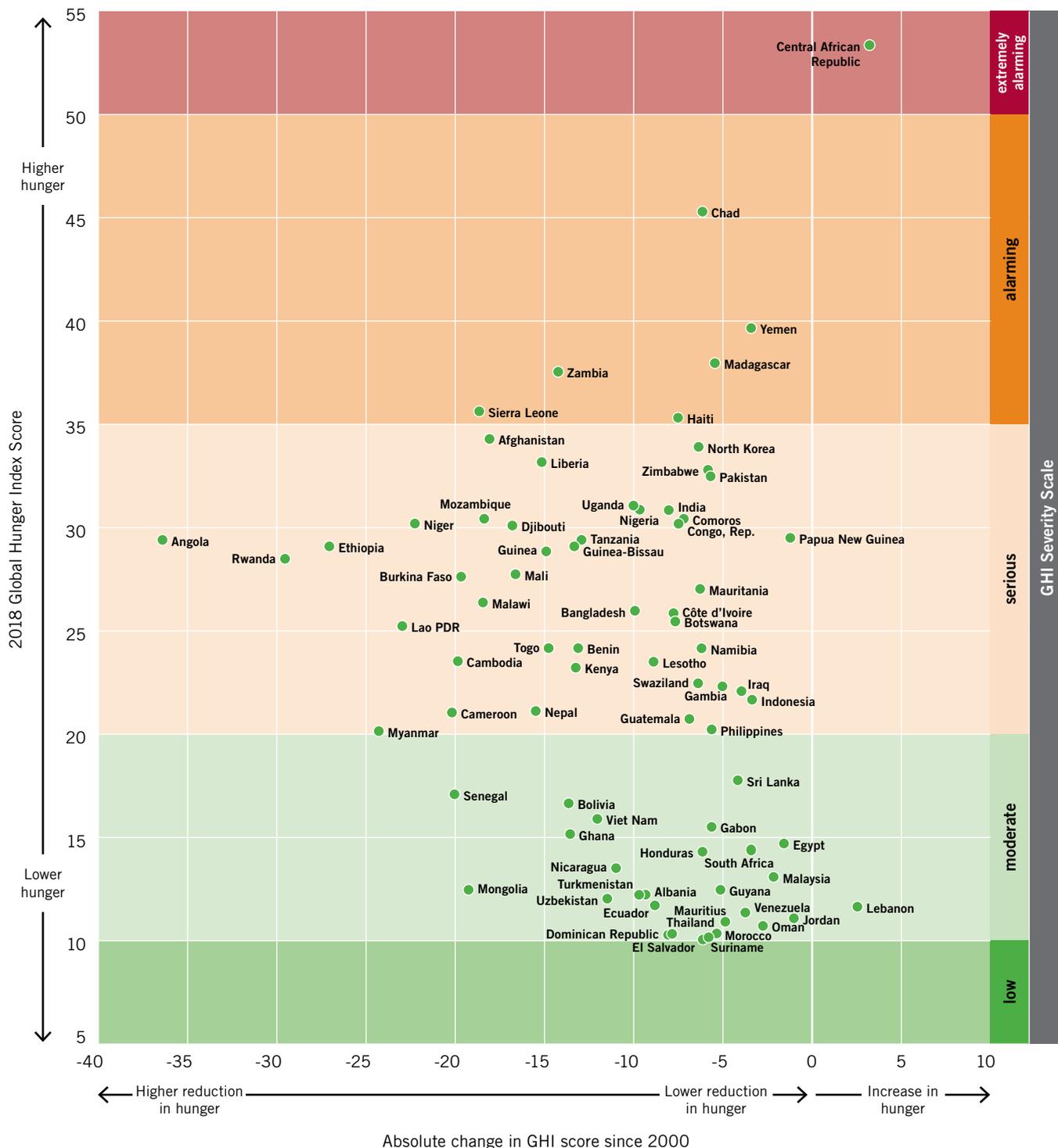
Source: Authors.

Note: For the 2018 GHI, data on the proportion of undernourished are for 2015–2017; data on child stunting and wasting are for the latest year in the period 2013–2017 for which data are available; and data on child mortality are for 2016. GHI scores were not calculated for countries for which data were not available and for certain countries with small populations.

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by Welthungerhilfe (WHH) or Concern Worldwide.

Recommended citation: "Figure 2.4: 2018 Global Hunger Index by Severity." Map in *2018 Global Hunger Index: Forced Migration and Hunger*, by K. von Grebmer, J. Bernstein, L. Hammond, F. Patterson, A. Sonntag, L. Klaus, J. Fahlbusch, O. Towey, C. Foley, S. Gitter, K. Ekstrom, and H. Fritschel. 2018. Bonn and Dublin: Welthungerhilfe and Concern Worldwide.

FIGURE 3 2018 GHI SCORES AND PROGRESS SINCE 2000



Source: Authors.  
 Note: This figure illustrates the change in GHI scores since 2000 in *absolute* values. The results cannot be compared to results from similar figures in previous GHI reports because of data revisions (see Chapter 1) and because previous figures featured the percentage change since 2000. This figure features countries where data were available to calculate 2000 and 2018 GHI scores and where 2018 GHI scores show *moderate*, *serious*, *alarming*, or *extremely alarming* hunger levels. Some likely poor performers may not appear due to missing data.

Despite the sobering statistics in a number of countries, there is cause for optimism. Although there are exceptions, the overall trends in hunger and undernutrition are promising and show improvements over time. This year's GHI includes 27 countries with *moderate* levels of hunger and 40 countries with *low* levels of hunger. Even some countries in South Asia and Africa south of the Sahara—the regions with the highest hunger and undernutrition levels—have achieved *moderate* scores.

Countries facing conflict fare particularly poorly owing to disruptions to food and clean water supplies, livelihoods, and health care services, which combine to jeopardize food and nutrition security. Even so, countries that experienced brutal civil wars and *extremely alarming* hunger levels in the past have seen remarkable reductions in hunger once their situations stabilized.

# FORCED MIGRATION AND HUNGER

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Across the globe, people are being forcibly displaced from their homes on a massive scale. There are an estimated 68.5 million displaced people worldwide, including 40.0 million internally displaced people (IDPs), 25.4 million refugees, and 3.1 million asylum seekers. Hunger is a persistent danger that threatens the lives of large numbers of forcibly displaced people and influences their decisions about when and where to move. An analysis of the interplay between hunger and forced migration, however, reveals that common misperceptions continue to influence policy despite considerable evidence showing that they are not productive. The essay on forced migration and hunger in the 2018 GHI report challenges these misperceptions and proposes the following four ways of understanding and addressing the issues:

## 1 Hunger and Displacement Are Political Problems

Hunger is often understood to result from environmental or natural causes. In fact, hunger, like displacement, is usually the result of political circumstances. Natural disasters—droughts, floods, and severe weather events—lead to hunger and displacement only when governments are unprepared or unwilling to respond because they either lack the capacity or engage in deliberate neglect or abuse of power. This reality means that any response to forced displacement must engage with the underlying political factors. Support is needed for policies designed to prevent conflict and build peace at all levels, as well as for policies that reinforce government accountability and transparency, which make it more difficult for governments to shirk their duty to meet citizens' basic needs for safety and food security.

## 2 Long-Term Solutions Are Required

The world's response to situations of forced migration is almost always to undertake short-term humanitarian action to meet displaced people's most basic food and nonfood needs, often in

the hope and expectation that they will be able to return to their areas of origin before long. This wager has proven time and time again to be misguided. Most forced migration is protracted, lasting for many years—even generations. A more holistic approach would be to invest in long-term efforts to overcome chronic food insecurity by, for example, promoting economic livelihoods and building resilience, and offering benefits to the communities that host displaced people.

## 3 Food-Insecure Displaced People Need Support in Their Region of Origin

Although the arrival of refugees and migrants in Europe and the United States has been highly visible, most people facing food insecurity tend to seek the closest possible place of safety and are thus found in poorer countries and regions. Given their short-range movements and the disproportionate burden on host communities, food-insecure refugees and internally displaced people need to be assisted, if possible, in their regions of origin.

## 4 Build on the Resilience of Displaced People

Policies designed to assist refugees and internally displaced people often work to undermine their resilience by limiting their capacity to advance their own livelihoods. Yet despite being compelled to move, forcibly displaced people never entirely lose their agency or resilience. Thus, a more holistic response to forced displacement would focus on supporting people's livelihoods in their regions of origin and bolstering resilience in ways that support local markets and strengthen livelihood systems, thereby making people more self-sufficient and independent.

# POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

## Leave No One Behind

- **FOCUS RESOURCES AND ATTENTION ON THE REGIONS OF THE WORLD WHERE MOST DISPLACED PEOPLE ARE LOCATED:** low- and middle-income countries and the least-developed countries. Displaced people and host communities in these countries should receive strong, sustained support from governments and international organizations.
- **PROVIDE STRONGER POLITICAL AND HUMANITARIAN** support to internally displaced people (IDPs) and advocate for their legal protection. Governments must accelerate progress under the UN Plan of Action for Advancing Prevention, Protection, and Solutions for Internally Displaced People 2018–2020.
- **FOLLOW UP ON UN RESOLUTION 2417 (2018)**, which focuses on the links between armed conflict, conflict-induced food insecurity, and the threat of famine. Introduce a robust monitoring, reporting, and accountability mechanism for addressing violations.
- **PRIORITIZE THE SPECIAL VULNERABILITIES AND CHALLENGES OF WOMEN AND GIRLS.** Ensure that displaced women and girls have equal access to assets, services, productive and financial resources, and income-generating opportunities. Work with men, women, boys, and girls to end gender-based violence and exploitation.
- **SCALE UP INVESTMENT AND IMPROVE GOVERNANCE TO ACCELERATE DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL AREAS**, which is where large numbers of displaced people originate and where hunger is often greatest. Support people's efforts to diversify their livelihoods and secure access to land, markets, and services. Promote sustainable agricultural practices that increase households' resilience and enhance domestic food supplies.

## Implement Long-Term Solutions

- **STRENGTHEN THE RESILIENCE OF DISPLACED POPULATIONS BY PROVIDING ACCESS** to education and training, employment, health care, agricultural land, and markets so they can build their self-reliance and ensure their long-term food and nutrition security, as outlined in the core commitments on forced migration from the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit.
- **IMPLEMENT DURABLE SOLUTIONS**, such as local integration or return to regions of origin on a voluntary basis. Expand safe, legal pathways for refugees through resettlement schemes, such as humanitarian admission programs. Create mechanisms to accelerate status determination so that people do not have to live with uncertainty for long periods. Equally, pursue long-term solutions for displaced people living outside of camps, who often rely on host families or communities but receive little or no official support.
- **DESIGN POLICIES AND PROGRAMS** that recognize the complex interplay between hunger and forced migration as well as the dynamics of displacement. For example, support flexible approaches that allow people to maintain businesses, livelihoods, and social ties in multiple locations.

## Show Solidarity, Share Responsibility

- **ADOPT AND IMPLEMENT THE UN GLOBAL COMPACT ON REFUGEES (GCR)** and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), and integrate their commitments into national policy plans. Monitor and report regularly on progress.
- **DELIVER ON AND SCALE UP GOVERNMENT** commitments to international humanitarian organizations that support refugees and IDPs and close the funding gaps that already exist.
- **UPHOLD HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES AND HUMAN RIGHTS** when assisting and hosting refugees, IDPs, and their host communities. Do not use official development assistance as a bargaining chip in negotiations over migration policies.
- **ADDRESS THE ROOT CAUSES OF FORCED DISPLACEMENT** especially in the areas of poverty and hunger reduction; climate action; responsible consumption and production; and promotion of peace, justice, and strong institutions.
- **FOSTER A FACT-BASED DISCUSSION AROUND MIGRATION, DISPLACEMENT, AND REFUGEES.** Governments, politicians, international organizations, civil society, and the media should work to proactively counter misconceptions and promote a more informed debate on these issues.

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