

# *Hunger continues to threaten Latin America*

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**One in 10 people live in conditions of hunger in Latin America. Photo: AP**

By María Josefina Arce

The specter of hunger continues to haunt the world. The appearance of new variants of COVID-19, such as Omicron with its vertiginous rate of transmission, and the low levels of vaccination, especially in less developed nations, raise fears of a worsening of this problem by 2022.

The reality is that the arrival of COVID-19 brought not only a global health crisis, but also led to an increase in unemployment, poverty, food prices and hunger.

In the world, between 720 million and 811 million people suffered from hunger last year, when COVID-19 hit hard in different geographical areas.

A particularly critical scenario for Latin America, the most unequal region on the planet. From 2019 to last year, 60 million more people joined the army of the hungry, the worst figure in two decades.

Currently, four out of 10 people in the area do not eat adequately every day, and one in 10 live in conditions of hunger.

These data show that in terms of food security Latin America qualifies as the worst in 2020 and maintains for six consecutive years a growth in hunger.

A report prepared by several UN agencies revealed that women continue to be the hardest hit by this situation. According to statistics, about 42% of this population sector sees their right to food affected, while among men this rate is 32.2%.

A gap that has increased significantly since 2019 and especially impacts women in the rural sector, according to international organizations.

The increase in unemployment and therefore, the decrease or loss of family income due to the pandemic caused the worsening of this scenario in the world and especially in Latin America, where public policies to ensure food security have been insufficient.

Even before COVID-19, the increase in hunger was already a worldwide concern due to various factors such as armed conflicts, socioeconomic conditions, natural disasters and climate change.

According to forecasts, 2022 does not look to be much better, raising fears that the goal of eliminating hunger, one of the Sustainable Development Goals for 2030, will be even further away for many countries.

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