

# *Hunger in the Horn of Africa*

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Image / Fao

By Guillermo Alvarado

The joint action of three serious phenomena, intense drought, endless armed conflicts and the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic, is causing a severe famine in the Horn of Africa where a great number of human beings lack the minimum indispensable nutrients.

A recent report by the World Food Program, WFP, warned about this situation, which could lead again to a crisis similar to the one that occurred in the decade from 1982 to 1991, when around two million people died of starvation in that region.

The Horn of Africa is the easternmost part of the continent, comprising Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia and Djibouti, which covers 1,882,000 square kilometers and is home to 130 million people.

Ten percent of this population is currently suffering the effects of acute food shortages and is in urgent need of international humanitarian aid to save their lives.

This is an area that has historically had great political, economic and social instability, with recurrent wars, whether internal or between the nations that comprise it, which generate large displacements of people in search of safety.

Because of its geographical position, at the access to the Red Sea leading to the Suez Canal, through which ships loaded with huge quantities of oil and other products pass every day, it attracts the attention of the United States and the European powers, but not precisely to guarantee its development.

In fact, Washington was one of the main protagonists of the UN "humanitarian missions" in Somalia, which were actually intended to ensure the flow of fuel and raw materials.

These missions were a complete fiasco, including the "Battle of Mogadishu" where the Pentagon's elite troops suffered a humiliating defeat, and in the end former President Bill Clinton ordered the withdrawal of his troops.

In addition to wars, it is an area constantly affected by natural phenomena, such as intense droughts, plagues or floods.

It is one of the areas in Africa with the lowest vaccination rate against covid-19, which is further damaging the weak local economy.

The UN Children's Fund, Unicef, reported that at least 5.5 million children under the age of five in the Horn of Africa suffer from acute malnutrition, which compromises their lives and their future.

One more challenge for humanity that adds to the calamities in Afghanistan, Yemen, Iraq, Libya and a long list that shows how much we still need to learn to live in peace and harmony in today's world.

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