

UN report says nearly 10 percent of the world's population affected by hunger last year



United Nations, July 7 (RHC)-- World hunger levels rose again last year after soaring in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Ukraine war coupled with climate change now threaten starvation and mass migration on an “unprecedented scale” this year, according to UN agencies.

Up to 828 million people, or nearly 10 percent of the world's population, were affected by hunger last year, 46 million more than in 2020 and 150 million more than in 2019, agencies including the Food and Agriculture Organization, World Food Program and World Health Organisation said on Wednesday in the 2022 edition of the UN food security and nutrition report.

“There is a real danger these numbers will climb even higher in the months ahead,” said WFP Executive Director David Beasley, adding that price spikes in food, fuel and fertilisers stemming from the Russia-

Ukraine war threaten to push countries into famine.

“The result will be global destabilisation, starvation, and mass migration on an unprecedented scale. We have to act today to avert this looming catastrophe,” he added.

Russia and Ukraine are the world’s third and fourth-largest grains exporters, respectively, while Russia is also a key fuel and fertiliser exporter.

The war has disrupted their exports, pushed world food prices to record levels and triggered protests in developing countries already contending with elevated food prices due to COVID-19-related supply chain disruptions.

Al Jazeera’s diplomatic correspondent James Bays, reporting from the United Nations in New York, said the report’s findings make for a “very, very grim situation” globally.

The COVID-19 pandemic, armed conflicts around the world, and climate change have combined to create an unprecedented situation for the most vulnerable, Bays said. “Some of it is about funding and clearly the UN doesn’t have the money to solve this problem,” he said.

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