



## GIEWS Country Brief Sierra Leone

Reference Date: 18-November-2022

### FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Production of cereals in 2022 expected slightly above average
- Cereal imports in 2022 forecast at well above-average levels
- Prices of rice and other key food products increased steadily in 2022 and well above year-earlier levels
- About 1.61 million people estimated to face acute food insecurity in 2022

### Production of cereals in 2022 expected slightly above average

Harvesting of the 2022 paddy rice, the main cereal grown in the country, and minor coarse grains (maize, millet and sorghum) crops is underway and is expected to be completed by the end of December. Seasonal rains were conducive for crop development as cumulative amounts between April and October were adequate to satisfy crop water requirements. Localized crop losses have been caused by rainfall deficits in July and August, and by floods in August in northwestern, western and southern areas. Planted area to cereal crops, mostly paddy, is estimated to have increased year-on-year, reflecting the government's efforts to support mechanized farming, in particular by enhancing farmers' access to tractors and the provision of subsidized rice seeds and fertilizers.

Aggregate cereal production in 2022 is preliminarily forecast at 1.4 million tonnes, about 6 percent above the previous year's average level, owing to favourable weather conditions and expansion of the planted area.

### Cereal imports in 2022 forecast at well above-average levels

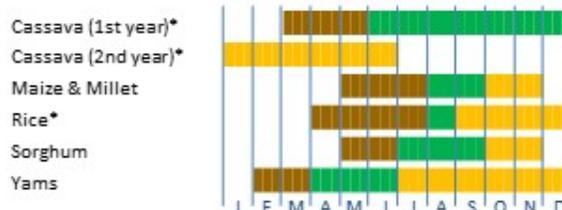
The country relies on imports of cereals, mainly rice and wheat, to cover its consumption needs. In the 2022 calendar year, rice imports are anticipated at 480 000 tonnes, a 20 percent yearly increase and about 25 percent above the five-year average, reflecting the lingering need to bolster the local supply following a drop in production in 2019 and 2020, and growing domestic demand. Imports of wheat in 2022 are forecast at about 115 000 tonnes, about 8 percent above the previous year's level and 22 percent above the five-year average, underpinned by increasing domestic consumption.

In order to support imports of essential foods and products in

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Crop Calendar

(\*major foodcrop)



lean period



Source: FAO/GIEWS.

### Sierra Leone

#### Cereal Production

	2017-2021	2021	2022	change
	average		forecast	2022/2021
	000 tonnes			percent
Rice (paddy)	1 186	1 160	1 260	8.6
Sorghum	62	80	65	-18.7
Millet	39	40	38	-5.0
Others	38	38	36	-6.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>1 325</b>	<b>1 318</b>	<b>1 399</b>	<b>6.1</b>

Note: Percentage change calculated from unrounded data.

Source: FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheet.

2022, the government established the Food and Fuel Facilities in April, allocating USD 50 million to support the import of rice, wheat flour and sugar as well as USD 50 million to support the import of fuel.

## Prices of rice and other key food products increased steadily in 2022 and well above year-earlier levels

Prices of locally produced rice, the country's main staple, levelled off in August and September, following a steady increase since the beginning of 2022, while prices of imported rice varieties increased further during those two months. Compared to their previous year's levels, prices of local and imported rice varieties were up to 35 and 40 percent, respectively, higher. Prices of other key food products, including palm oil and cassava, an important substitute for rice for poor households, also registered significant increases throughout 2022, and as of September, they were up to 50 percent higher on a yearly basis. The high prices mostly reflect trends in international markets, high energy costs and the significant depreciation of the national currency.

The average price of fuels such as gasoline, diesel and kerosene continued to increase in the third quarter of 2022, reaching SLL 19 333, up about 20 percent higher compared to the previous quarter. The leone was equivalent to about SLL 14 500/USD 1 in September 2022 compared to SLL 10 480/USD 1 in August 2021, increasing the costs of imports. Overall, the year-on-year food inflation was estimated at 35.2 percent in September 2022, up from 13.3 percent in the same month in 2021.

## About 1.61 million people estimated to face acute food insecurity in 2022

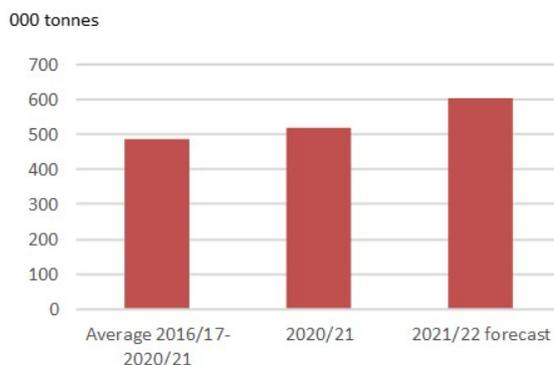
According to the March 2022 "Cadre Harmonisé" (CH) analysis, about 1.61 million people were estimated to face acute food insecurity (CH Phase 3 [Crisis] and above) from June to August 2022, including 26 400 people in CH Phase 4 (Emergency). This is below the 1.76 million people estimated to be in CH Phase 3 (Crisis) and above levels of acute food insecurity during the same period in 2021.

Despite the ongoing cereal harvests, which are expected to improve food availability, concerns about access to food persist. Prices of food stand at elevated levels and household purchasing power remains under pressure, amid severe macroeconomic difficulties, including increased trade deficits, rampant inflation and the depreciation of the national currency. High debt levels, monetary tightening and reduced domestic private consumption slowed down economic growth in 2022, reducing income-generating opportunities for the most vulnerable households. In addition, according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), about 8 000 people were affected by floods in August in northwestern, western and southern areas, increasing the risk of a deterioration of food security conditions. According to the World Food Programme, as of August 2022, 4.3 million people had insufficient food consumption levels, of which 4.2 million were engaging in crisis or emergency food-based coping strategies.

New CH estimates of the number of people facing acute food insecurity in the last quarter of 2022 are expected to be released by the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) in late November.

## Sierra Leone

### Cereals Imports

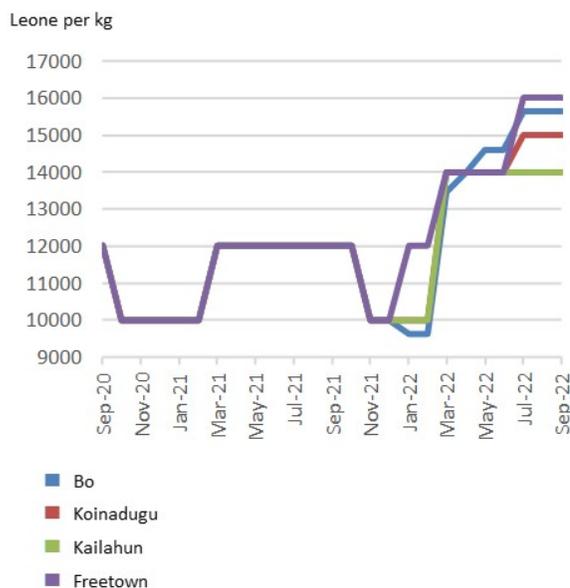


Notes: Includes rice in milled terms. Split year refers to individual crop marketing years (for rice, calendar year of second year shown).

Source: FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheets.

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### Retail prices of rice (local)

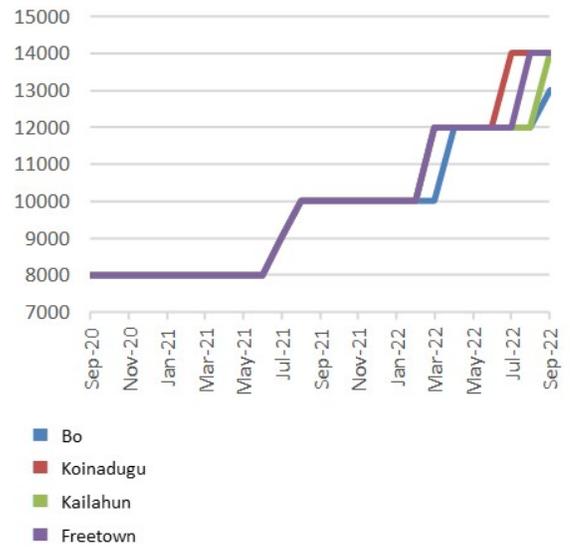


Source: FAO/GIEWS Food Price Monitoring and Analysis Tool.

## Sierra Leone

### Retail prices of rice (imported)

Leone per kg



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Source: FAO/GIEWS Food Price Monitoring and Analysis Tool.