



GIEWS Country Brief The Republic of Sierra Leone

Reference Date: 15-March-2024

FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- **Land preparation for 2024 cereal crops ongoing**
- **Cereal production in 2023 estimated at above-average level**
- **Prices of rice higher year-on-year**
- **Acute food insecurity projected to increase in 2024**

Land preparation for 2024 cereal crops ongoing

Land preparation for 2024 cereal crops is underway and planting of the rice crop, the main cereal grown in the country, is expected to start in April. Planting operations of coarse grain crops (maize, millet and sorghum) will begin in May. Weather forecasts for the April to July period indicate a high probability of average to above-average rainfall amounts, which are expected to benefit planting operations and germination of early-planted crops.

Cereal production in 2023 estimated at above-average level

Harvesting operations of the 2023 cereal crops concluded last December. Aggregate 2023 cereal production is estimated at nearly 1.7 million tonnes, about 10 percent above the 2022 level and approximately 26 percent higher than the average of the previous five years, reflecting generally favourable weather conditions. Furthermore, the support by the government in terms of improving access to agricultural inputs as well as mechanization and extension services, boosted yields.

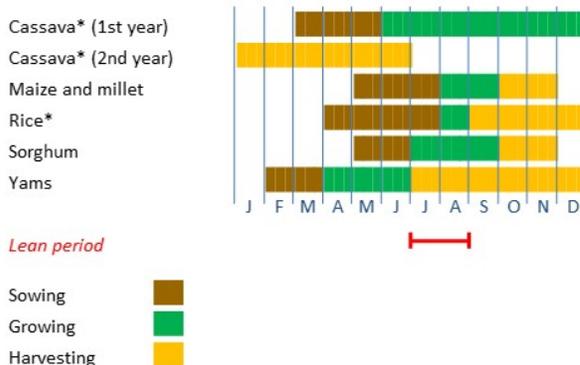
Prices of rice higher year-on-year

Retail prices of locally-produced rice, the most consumed cereal in the country, declined seasonally by 10 to 20 percent between September and December 2023 (latest available data), while prices of imported rice remained stable in most markets during the same period. In December 2023, prices of local and imported rice were up to 35 and 45 percent, respectively, above their elevated year-earlier values across the country.

The high prices of rice mostly reflect the elevated international prices of agricultural inputs as well as rising fuel prices, which affected production and transport costs. Furthermore, the depreciation of the leone, that was equivalent to

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Crop Calendar *(*major foodcrop)*



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Cereal Production

	2018-2022 average	2022	2023 estimate	change 2023/2022
	000 tonnes			percent
Rice (paddy)	1 189	1 397	1 537	10.0
Sorghum	58	58	61	4.7
Millet	37	39	41	4.7
Others	40	33	36	8.3
Total	1 325	1 527	1 674	9.6

Note: Percentage change calculated from unrounded data.

SLL 22.7/USD 1 in December 2023 compared to SLL 18.7/USD 1 in December 2022, increased the cost of all imported goods.

The annual food inflation rate increased steadily between January 2022 and September 2023, when it reached an all-time high of 65 percent. In the last quarter of 2023, food inflation slightly declined and, in December 2023 (latest available data), it was estimated at 57 percent.

Acute food insecurity projected to increase in 2024

According to the November 2023 Cadre Harmonisé (CH) analysis, nearly 1.46 million people (about 9 percent of the analyzed population) are projected to face acute food insecurity (CH Phase 3 [Crisis]) during the 2024 June to August lean season period. This represents a substantial deterioration compared to the same period in 2023, when about 1.18 million people (nearly 16 percent of the analyzed population) were estimated to be acutely food insecure. However, unlike in 2023, no people are projected to be in CH Phase 4 (Emergency) in 2024.

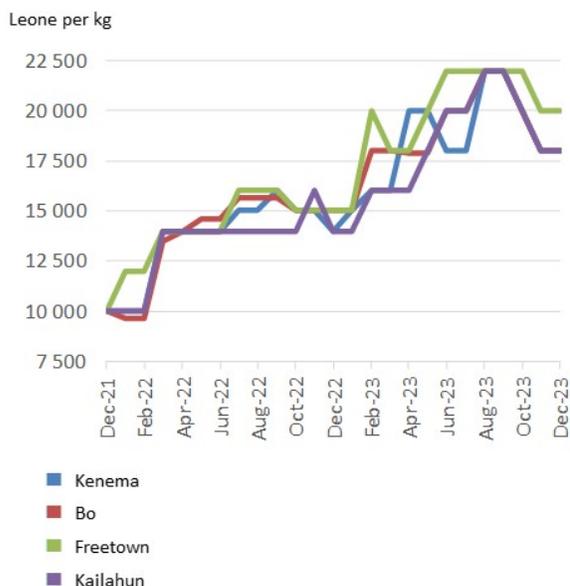
The projected increase in the total number of acutely food insecure people is mostly underpinned by the sustained high food and non-food inflation, coupled with the low households' purchasing power.

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This brief was prepared using the following data/tools:
 FAO/GIEWS Country Cereal Balance Sheet (CCBS) <https://www.fao.org/giews/data-tools/en/>.
 FAO/GIEWS Food Price Monitoring and Analysis (FPMA) Tool <https://fpma.fao.org/>.
 FAO/GIEWS Earth Observation for Crop Monitoring <https://www.fao.org/giews/earthobservation/>.
 Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) <https://www.ipcinfo.org/>.

Sierra Leone

Retail prices of rice (local)



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Retail prices of rice (imported)

