



# GIEWS Country Brief

## The Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste

Reference Date: 20-November-2024

### FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Well below-average cereal production forecast in 2024
- Above-average cereal import requirements forecast in 2024/25
- Prices of rice at near-record levels throughout 2024
- High levels of food insecurity prevail in 2024

### Well below-average cereal output forecast in 2024

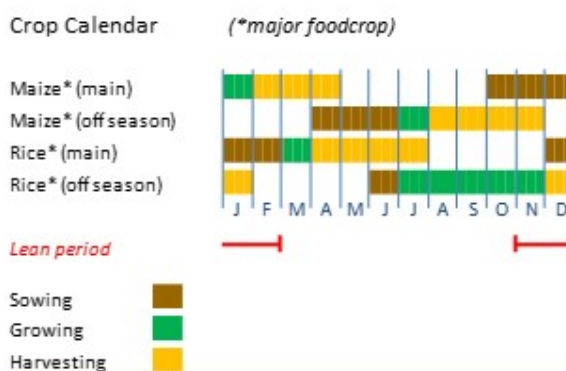
Harvesting of the 2024 *main* rice and maize crops finalized last July and production is estimated to be significantly below the average level. The low output is due to reduced sowings and yields on account of El Niño-related dry weather conditions between October 2023 and February 2024. The municipalities of Baucau, western Covalima, southern Manufahi and Ainaru as well as the coastal areas of Manatuto and Lautem, which together account for about half of the main cereal crop production, were most affected by the dryness. Harvesting of the 2024 minor *off-season* maize crop is ongoing, while paddy crop is at maturation stage and harvesting will begin in December 2024. Weather conditions since the start of the season have been generally favourable, supporting above-average sowings and benefitting crop development. Weather forecasts point at a high probability of above-average precipitation amounts between November 2024 and January 2025 across most of the country. However, if rains will be excessive, they could hamper harvesting operations of both maize and paddy crops and affect yields of late planted paddy crops.

Overall, 2024 aggregate cereal production, mostly rice and maize, is forecast at 132 000 tonnes, almost 20 percent below the average.

### Above-average cereal import requirements forecast in 2024/25

About 60 percent of the country's total cereal consumption needs are covered by imports, mostly sourced from India, China (mainland) and Viet Nam. Cereal import requirements in the 2024/25 marketing year (April/March) are forecast at a well above-average level of 210 000 tonnes, due to the reduced production obtained in 2024 and increasing domestic demand in line with population growth.

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#### Cereal Production

	2019-2023	2024		change
	average	2023	estimate	2024/2023
000 tonnes				
percent				
Rice (paddy)	81	83	62	-25.8
Maize	81	85	70	-17.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>-21.7</b>

Note: Percentage change calculated from unrounded data.

## Prices of rice at near-record levels throughout 2024

Domestic retail prices of rice, the country's main staple, have been generally stable at near-record highs throughout 2024, following the steep increase that occurred in 2023. The persistent high level of prices was mainly driven by the low 2024 domestic production and the elevated quotations in international markets.

## High levels of food insecurity prevail in 2024

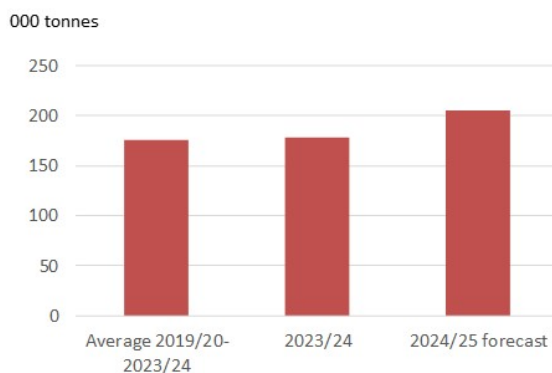
According to the latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysis, about 364 000 people (27 percent of the total population) were projected to face high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 [Crisis] and above) from May to September 2024, up from about 260 000 people during the same period in 2023. The deterioration of the food security situation is mainly driven by the low 2024 main cereal production that affected farmers' livelihoods and exerted upward pressure on domestic food prices. Persistent high food prices, coupled with reduced income, due to the economic slowdown in 2022 and 2023, have constrained the purchasing power of vulnerable households, limiting their access to food and worsening their food security conditions.

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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/>.

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### Cereals Imports



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

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### Retail prices of rice

