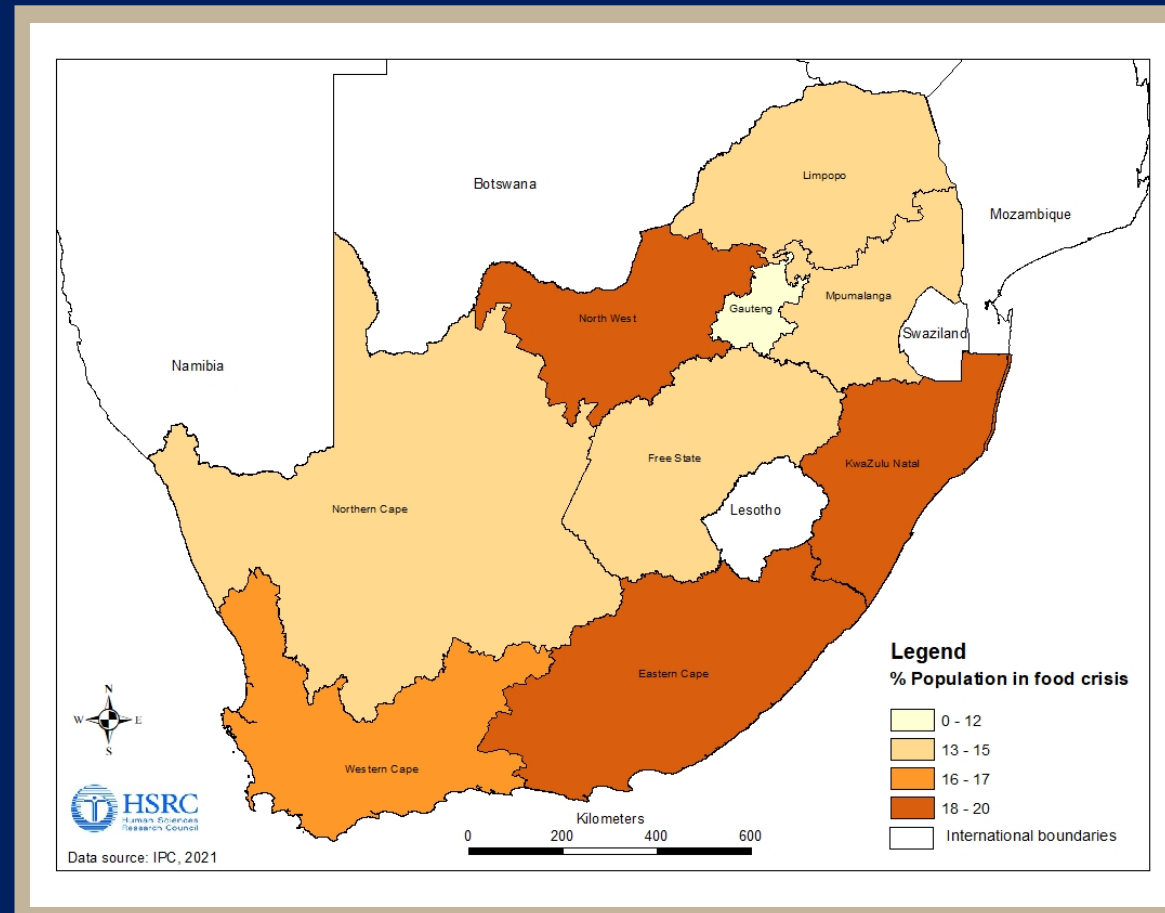


FOOD SECURITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

Percentage of people classified in food crisis levels: January – March 2021

The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) released preliminary results on the state of food security in South Africa for 2020 – 2021. The report classifies food security into five categories, namely Phase 5 (Catastrophe), 4 (Emergency), 3 (Crisis), 2 (Stressed) and 1 (Secure).



This map shows the percentage of people in Crisis (Phase 3) for January – March 2021.

Twelve percent of the population in Gauteng were in food crisis, along with 15% in the Free State, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, and the Northern Cape. Sixteen percent of the Western Cape population, meanwhile, were at Crisis level, while the same applied to 19% of those in the Eastern Cape. KwaZulu-Natal and the North West had the highest percentage of people at food crisis level (20% each).

- 12%** **GAUTENG:** The province is heavily urbanized, with a high population, relying on unstable income sources. However, 12% of the population faced acute food insecurity.
- 15%** **FREE STATE:** It was projected that the percentage of people in need of urgent action would rise from 15% to 20% by the end of 2021.
- 15%** **LIMPOPO:** During this period, 15% of the population was in an acute food shortage phase, of which 5% fell into the Emergency Phase 4.
- 15%** **MPUMALANGA:** As in other provinces, Covid-19 related restrictions were expected to continue, affecting incomes and livelihoods in this province.
- 15%** **NORTHERN CAPE:** As the year progressed, the situation was expected to worsen, with an estimated 200 000 people expected to face high levels of acute food insecurity.
- 16%** **WESTERN CAPE:** The total population in crisis was estimated to increase to 1.3 million, of which 153 000 was classified in the Emergency phase.
- 19%** **EASTERN CAPE:** The percentage of people in Crisis level was expected to rise by 20% by March 2021 because of decreased labour opportunities in rural areas.
- 20%** **KWAZULU-NATAL:** Food prices, rising unemployment, diseases and drought was expected to worsen the situation in this province.
- 20%** **NORTH WEST:** During the projected period, over 1 million people faced high levels of acute food insecurity in the province.

Key drivers of food insecurity

The report notes that South Africa's deteriorating food security is mainly driven by the COVID-19 pandemic and mitigation measures, as well as high food prices, drought and economic decline. Click here to [Read more](#).

- **COVID-19**

The COVID-19 pandemic, with its lockdown restrictions, led to limited movement of people, job losses, and low agricultural productivity. These factors, amongst others, had severe negative effects, especially on the already vulnerable sectors of the South African society.

- **Economic decline and unemployment**

Slow economic growth, particularly in the last two quarters of 2020, was followed by high incidence of job losses, reduced income, and as a result the inability of most people to sustain themselves. Most households could, therefore, no longer afford basic foodstuffs.

- **Food prices**

The first quarter of 2021 saw a significant increase in food prices, spurred on by, among other things, rising fuel prices and reduced agricultural output. This had a major effect on food access, as most households in South Africa could no longer afford to purchase food.

- **Drought**

The drought experienced in some parts of the country during 2020 and the first half of 2021 had a negative effect on agriculture and food production.

Source: IPC South Africa Country Report, 2021

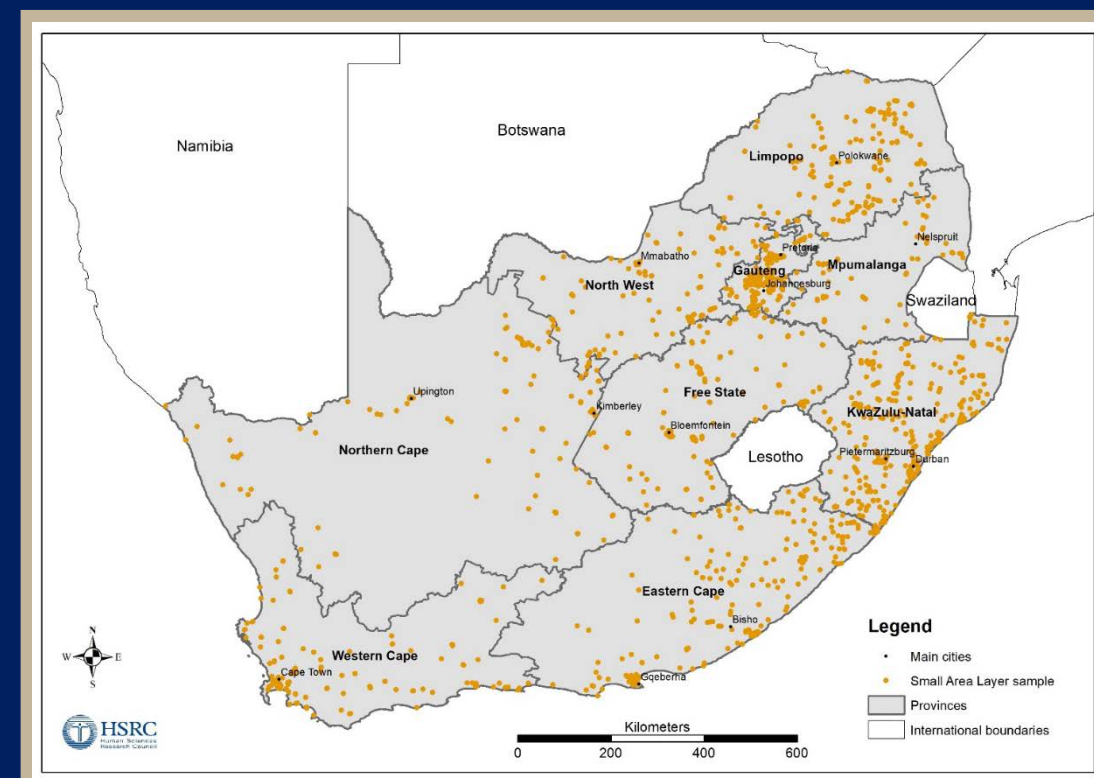
The HSRC must be acknowledged for all published and unpublished works, including the maps used in this series. The citation below is suggested:

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HSRC research on this topic

The HSRC is currently undertaking a national survey on food security and nutrition and the data will allow spatial analysis at a sub-provincial level. The sample design is depicted in the map below.

Previous surveys include:
SANHANES 2011-2012 and FIVIMS 2007.



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