



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
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# YEAR IN REVIEW 2021 NEAR EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

Highlights of FAO's emergency and resilience programming

The region faces several intersecting challenges that have increased fragility, threatened resilience, and exacerbated already high levels of acute food insecurity and malnutrition, including famine risk in Yemen. These include scarcity of water and arable land, climate change and climate-related disasters, conflict, land degradation, increasing population growth, and transboundary animal and plant pests and diseases. As a heavily import-dependent region, the agri-food sector has also been severely affected by increases in prices of basic food items and agricultural inputs, exacerbated by the current economic shocks, including those caused by COVID-19. This has worsened the food security situation, especially for already vulnerable families.

In 2021, conflict remained the main driver of food insecurity in the region. The three conflict-affected countries in the region (the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen) were among the top ten countries with the highest number of people in Crisis or worse (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification [IPC] Phase 3 and above) levels of food insecurity in the world.



## Responding to emergencies and building resilience in crisis-affected countries

In 2021, FAO supported 8 694 households (60 858 people) in nine governorates in Yemen, through cash and voucher assistance to construct or rehabilitate facilities, and engage in livelihood activities, aimed at reducing their vulnerability. Cash-for-work activities supported 8 044 households, with USD 2.5 million disbursed in total, while Cash+ activities totaling USD 600 000 supported 650 households. FAO's interventions led to the rehabilitation or construction of 19 canals, one control structure, 27 water-harvesting tanks, 96 protection/retaining walls, 83 terraces, one traditional water storage pond, 13 weirs and two shallow wells/springs.

Moreover, FAO provided 125 000 households in **Yemen** with agricultural inputs (vegetable and cereal seeds, drip irrigation kits and tools), animal feed, live animals, cash+, cash for work, cash vouchers, coffee value chain support, farmer field schools (FFSs), and irrigation systems. This increased their production, productivity, food consumption, nutrition, income and employment opportunities.

## Action for desert locust crisis response and control

Through the Desert Locust Commission, FAO built the capacity of government agencies in the region to implement effective and efficient preventive strategies for improved surveillance, inspection and control of the desert locust outbreak. In **Yemen**, 90 000 ha of land was treated/controlled against desert locust swarms.

The [surveillance and early warning information produced by FAO](#) was instrumental in anticipating action in the field, ensuring a quick response to control the outbreak.

## Promoting disaster risk and vulnerability reduction in conflict-affected communities

FAO trained farmers in the **Syrian Arab Republic** on growing and managing cacti as an alternative fodder source that could be planted on the margins of their lands. As cactus is a drought-tolerant plant,

this addresses the shortage of feed and fodder during extended dry spells and drought. This intervention targeted smallholder farmers who own agricultural land and livestock, especially female-headed households.

In **Iraq**, FAO trained people on fair and sustainable water usage and peacebuilding in three locations, following the establishment and distribution of water storage tanks of 25 000 litres capacity in water-stressed areas. The training focused on the operation and maintenance of water schemes and systems, good sanitary practices, and reliable/safe water provision. Beneficiaries in the three villages also received training on peacebuilding at the community level. Topics covered included the definition of peace, pillars of peace, obstacles to peace, and the role of community elders, leaders and local authorities. Given that water is often the centre of local conflicts, this intervention addressed access, management and conflict resolution at the community level.

## Promoting the integration of national disaster risk reduction in agricultural policies

Through a series of consultations in 2021, FAO produced the National Strategy/Contingency Plan for Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Aquaculture in **Lebanon**. This strategy identifies the priority hazards and risks to the agriculture sector in the country, and proposes contingency actions and risk reduction measures to be taken at the national and sub-national level.

## Promoting regional collaboration and cooperation for the management of hazards and risks

The increasing temperatures and adverse climatic conditions in the region have caused an increase in the incidence of forest fires. The [Near East Network on Wildlands Forest Fire \(NENFIRE\)](#) and the [Near East Forestry and Range Commission \(NEFRC\)](#) have been collectively building capacities of national stakeholders to prevent and address forest fires through Integrated Fire Management. Further, these networks promote regional dialogue and exchange of experiences to inform forestry policies.

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