



GIEWS Country Brief

The Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste

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FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- **Below-average 2024 main cereal output forecast due to El Niño-induced dry weather conditions**
- **Above-average cereal import requirements forecast in 2024/25**
- **Prices of rice at near-record levels in March 2024**
- **Food security conditions expected to deteriorate between May and September 2024**

Below-average 2024 main cereal output forecast due to dry weather conditions

Harvesting of the 2024 main maize crop was completed in April 2024, while the harvest of the paddy crop is still ongoing and will finalize in July. The production of both crops is set to be well below the five-year average, primarily due to low sowings caused by El Niño-induced dry weather conditions at planting time from October 2023 to January 2024. Dryness also affected yields of early-planted crops, particularly in the municipalities of Baucau, western Aileu, western Bobonaro and parts of Liquiçá. Precipitation amounts improved from February onwards and were average to above average until early May, benefitting late-planted crops. Planting of the 2024 off-season maize crop is ongoing, supported by generally adequate soil moisture conditions and harvesting will start in August, while planting of the paddy crop is expected to begin in June. Weather forecasts point to below-average precipitation amounts and elevated temperatures between June and August 2024 across most of the country, likely affecting planting operations of off-season crops, particularly rice, and curb yield potentials. Overall, 2024 aggregate cereal production is preliminarily forecast at a well below-average level of 132 000 tonnes.

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 an above-average level of 210 000 tonnes, mainly due to the expected reduced cereal output in 2024.

Timor-Leste

Crop Calendar

(*major foodcrop)



Timor-Leste

Cereal Production

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

Note: Percentage change calculated from unrounded data.

Prices of rice at near-record levels in March 2024

Prices of rice, the country's main staple, increased throughout 2023, with a steep rise recorded between August and November, following the export ban of non-basmati white rice by India. After a brief seasonal decline between December 2023 and February 2024, prices resumed their increasing trend in March due to expectations of a reduced 2024 main paddy output. Overall, March prices were at near-record levels and 30 percent higher than a year before.

Food security conditions expected to deteriorate between May and September 2024

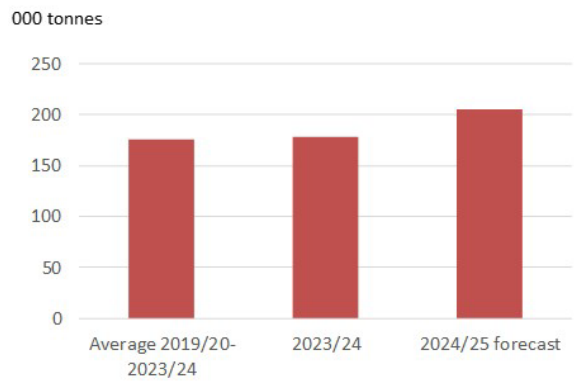
According to the latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysis, about 364 000 people (27 percent of the total population) are projected to face high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 [Crisis] and above) from May to September 2024, up from about 260 000 people during the same period in 2023. The deterioration of the food security situation is mainly driven by the sharply reduced 2024 main cereal production likely affecting farmers' livelihoods and exerting additional upward pressure on already high domestic food prices. Persistent high food prices, coupled with reduced income, following 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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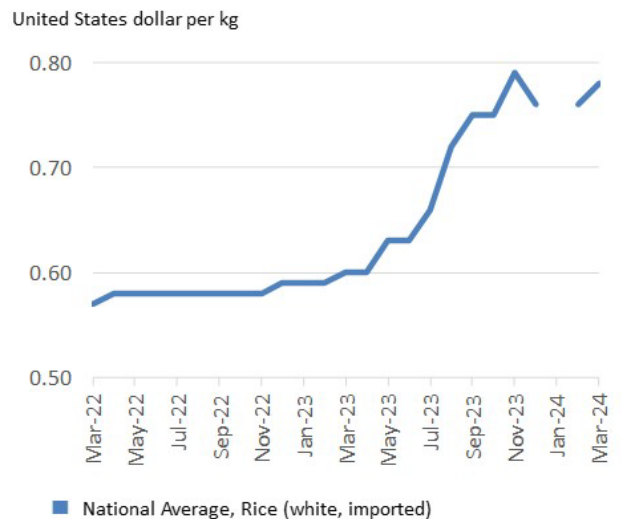
Cereals Imports



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



■ National Average, Rice (white, imported)