

Report finds 1 billion hungry people in world: 100 million more than last year

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Failure to act by governments and international institutions has left more than 1 billion around the world undernourished, according to a coalition of religious, human rights and development groups.

“Despite record grain crops worldwide, the number of undernourished people in the world in 2009 reached the historically high figure of 1.02 billion people, about 100 million more than in 2008,” says a report released October 12 in Geneva by a coalition including the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, the Swiss Protestant agency Bread for All, FIAN Switzerland and the FoodFirst Information and Action Network.

According to the report, “Who Controls the Governance of the World Food System,” the worldwide recession that started last year “pushed aside” the global food crisis. The report says that while trillions of dollars were allocated to save banks and insurance companies, only 10 to 15 percent of the \$20 billion pledged last year to support agriculture in developing countries has been allocated.

The data focused on the state of the implementation of the right to food and nutrition in nine countries: Benin, Brazil, Cambodia, India, Guatemala, Kenya, Nicaragua, Uganda and Zambia.

“Right-to-food violations and chronic hunger are closely linked. Most victims of hunger and malnutrition are also victims of discrimination and exclusion, with no voice to be heard,” said Ester Wolf, a policy adviser with Bread for All and a member of the board of directors of the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance.

The alliance is an international network of more than 50 church bodies and Christian organizations committed to joint action on critical issues facing the world. In May, it launched a global campaign on food. *—Religion News Service, Ecumenical News International*