

Obese now outnumber hungry: Red Cross

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Obese people now outnumber the hungry globally, but hardship for the undernourished is increasing amid a growing food crisis, the International Federation of the Red Cross warned Thursday.

The Geneva-based humanitarian group focused on nutrition in its annual World Disasters Report, released in New Delhi, seeking to highlight the [disparity](#) between rich and poor, as well problems caused by a recent spike in prices.

In statistics used to underline the unequal access to food, the IFRC stressed there were 1.5 billion people suffering obesity worldwide last year, while 925 million were undernourished.

"If the free interplay of market forces has produced an outcome where 15 percent of humanity are hungry while 20 percent are overweight, something has gone wrong somewhere," secretary general Bekele Geleta said in a statement.

Asia-Pacific director Jagan Chapagain called it a "double-edged scandal" at a press conference in the Indian capital, adding that "excess nutrition now kills more than hunger."

The problem of hunger existed not because there was a lack of food globally, he stressed, but because of poor distribution, wastage and rising prices that made food unaffordable.

[Food prices](#) have spiked globally in 2011, raising fears of a re-run of the

crisis seen in 2008 which led to riots and political instability in many countries.

The rise in food prices, which the IFRC blamed on speculative commodity trading and [climate change](#), among other factors, is seen as having contributed to the unrest witnessed in north Africa and the Middle East this year.

"A new round of [food](#) inflation... is plunging many of the world's poorest people into deeper poverty and situations of severe hunger and malnourishment," the organisation said.

The World Disasters Report is an annual publication by the group seeking to highlight an area of global concern. Last year's study focused on urbanisation, while 2009's was on HIV and health.

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