

# Global Hunger Deaths vs. AI Investment (2024 Data Overview)

## Global Hunger-Related Deaths in 2024

Hunger remains one of the world's gravest humanitarian crises, causing millions of preventable deaths each year. **In 2024, approximately 9 million people died from hunger and hunger-related causes – equivalent to about 25,000 deaths every single day** <sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup>. This staggering toll (about **one person every 3–4 seconds**) disproportionately affects young children; roughly **half of all child deaths worldwide are linked to malnutrition**, translating to ~3.1 million children under 5 dying of hunger each year <sup>3</sup> <sup>4</sup>. These hunger-related fatalities outnumber the annual deaths from AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis combined <sup>2</sup>, underscoring the severity of the crisis.

- **Conflict Hotspots:** Countries embroiled in conflict see especially acute hunger. An **Oxfam report on World Food Day 2024** warned that in war-torn regions, **between 7,000 and 21,000 people may be dying each day from conflict-driven hunger** <sup>5</sup>. Conflict not only displaces populations but is often “**weaponizing**” starvation, as warring parties destroy food systems and block aid <sup>6</sup> <sup>7</sup>. These lethal “food wars” make it even harder to achieve the UN’s goal of Zero Hunger by 2030.
- **Rising Hunger and At-Risk Populations:** After decades of progress, global hunger has been **on the rise since 2015**. The **WHO/FAO estimate for 2023** was that **around 733 million people** (1 in 11 globally) were undernourished <sup>1</sup>. Particularly in Africa, about **1 in 5 people go hungry each day** <sup>8</sup>. As of 2024, over **295 million people across 53 countries** faced “crisis” levels of acute food insecurity requiring urgent assistance – an increase of ~14 million from the year prior <sup>9</sup>. Famine-like conditions were present in several hotspots (e.g. parts of **South Sudan, Somalia, Yemen, Sudan, and Gaza**) <sup>10</sup>. In total, **1.33 million people were in active famine in late 2024** <sup>11</sup>, teetering on the brink of starvation. These figures highlight that the world is far off track from hunger eradication targets, with experts grimly noting that at the current pace **even “low” global hunger levels may not be achieved until the 22nd century** <sup>12</sup>.

### Key 2024 Hunger Death Figures:

- **Annual deaths:** ~9,000,000 people die from hunger-related causes per year <sup>1</sup>. (Many are children under 5.)
- **Daily average:** ~25,000 people die from hunger every day <sup>2</sup>, on average, in 2024.

## Investment in Artificial Intelligence in 2024

By contrast to the scarcity afflicting food security, **investment in artificial intelligence (AI) reached record highs in 2024**, as governments and especially the private sector poured resources into AI research and applications. Key facets of AI investment last year include:

## Corporate AI Spending (R&D and M&A)

Global **corporate spending on AI (including internal R&D, acquisitions, etc.) reached roughly \$250 billion in 2024**. According to the Stanford AI Index report, **“corporate AI investment reached \$252.3 billion in 2024”**, marking a ~26% increase over the previous year <sup>13</sup>. This figure reflects the *total* money directed toward AI by companies worldwide – from building AI research divisions and infrastructure to buying AI startups:

- **Mergers & Acquisitions (M&A):** 2024 saw a *surge* in AI-related acquisitions as tech firms raced to acquire AI talent and tech. The **value of global M&A deals involving AI startups jumped to about \$49.9 billion in 2024**, up **288%** from 2023 <sup>14</sup>. There were **454 AI startup acquisitions** announced (a 53% increase in deal volume) <sup>14</sup>. *Example:* Meta's \$14.8B purchase of a stake in AI startup Scale AI and OpenAI's \$6.4B acquisition of an AI hardware design firm were among the mega-deals in late 2024/early 2025 <sup>15</sup>. This M&A boom has continued into 2025 – by mid-2025, **AI acquisition deal value had already hit \$55.3 billion (Jan–June 2025)**, exceeding the *full-year* 2024 total <sup>16</sup>.
- **Internal R&D Spending:** Though exact breakdowns are hard to measure, major corporations dramatically ramped up their **in-house AI research and product development budgets**. For instance, tech giants like Google, Microsoft, and Amazon each invested tens of billions into AI (from training large language models to deploying AI cloud services). This internal spending is reflected in the overall \$252B corporate investment figure. Industry analysts IDC likewise projected **~\$235 billion in worldwide AI spending in 2024** (across software, hardware, services), a sum expected to **nearly triple to \$630B by 2028** given ~30% annual growth <sup>17</sup>. On a daily basis, **global spending on AI in 2024 averaged on the order of \$0.6–0.7 billion per day**, an amount dwarfed by military or healthcare spending, but immense for a tech sector.

## Private Investment and Venture Funding

**Private capital investment** – venture capital (VC), private equity, and other funding of AI-focused companies – also **soared in 2024**, reversing the dip seen in 2022–23. By Stanford's count, global **private AI investment (deals in AI companies) climbed ~44.5% in 2024** year-over-year <sup>13</sup>, reaching its highest level ever. Some highlights:

- **Venture Capital Funding:** Startups building AI systems attracted unprecedented funding. Crunchbase data shows **about \$100 billion of VC funding went to AI-related startups in 2024**, an **80% increase** over 2023 <sup>18</sup>. This means roughly **one-third of all venture dollars globally in 2024** were invested in AI companies <sup>19</sup>. Several blockbuster financing rounds fueled this surge – for example, **OpenAI secured ~\$10 billion in 2023–24** from Microsoft and others, and other AI labs like **Anthropic, Inflection AI, xAI, and Databricks** all raised multi-billion dollar rounds <sup>19</sup>. This **“AI boom”** in funding was heavily concentrated in late 2024 (Q4 saw over \$42B invested into AI startups, nearly *double* Q3) <sup>20</sup>, as hype around generative AI and ChatGPT-style products peaked.
- **Geographic Concentration:** Private AI investment was **highly concentrated in the United States**. An estimated **75%+ of all AI startup funding in 2024 flowed to U.S.-based companies** <sup>21</sup>. By contrast, venture funding in Asia (especially China) plummeted to decade-lows amid regulatory crackdowns <sup>22</sup>. **North America saw a 21% jump in startup funding** (driven by big AI deals) while **Asia's VC funding fell** sharply in 2024 <sup>23</sup>. *Europe* saw about \$51B in total startup funding (all sectors) in 2024 <sup>24</sup>, of which a growing share was AI-focused. This regional skew in AI investment reflects the leadership of U.S. tech firms and investors in the current AI wave.

## Investment by AI Subfield – *Generative AI's Boom*

Within the AI sector, **generative AI** (the subfield of AI that generates text, images, code, etc., using large models) witnessed an **explosive rise in investment** in 2023–2024. Generative AI became a major magnet for funding after the public success of systems like ChatGPT:

- The Stanford AI Index reports that **private investment in generative AI reached \$33.9 billion in 2024**, up **18.7% from 2023** and a stunning **8.5× higher than in 2022** <sup>25</sup>. In other words, in just two years the generative AI sector went from a niche to absorbing **over 20% of all AI-related investment in 2024** <sup>25</sup>. This includes venture funding of model labs (OpenAI, Anthropic, Cohere, etc.), numerous generative AI startups in areas like image/video generation, and corporate expenditures on generative AI integration. *For example*, Microsoft's multi-billion investment into OpenAI, and Google's ramp-up of generative AI R&D, are part of this trend.
- Stanford's data shows a clear inflection point around 2022–2023 when **funding for generative AI nearly octupled** (growing from just ~\$4B in 2022 to ~\$25B in 2023) <sup>26</sup>. By 2024, **generative AI was a top theme in 80% of Fortune 500 earnings calls** <sup>27</sup>, and companies across industries started launching generative AI pilots, which in turn attracted more investment. This **"Generative AI gold rush"** has cooled slightly in 2025 (as excitement is tempered by challenges in monetization and regulation), but it remains a major locus of AI R&D spending.

## Investment by Country (U.S., China, Europe, etc.)

**The United States is by far the world leader in AI investment.** In 2024, **U.S. private AI investment reached \$109.1 billion**, which is **almost 12× higher than China's \$9.3 billion** and **24× higher than the U.K.'s \$4.5 billion** <sup>28</sup>. This disparity has *widened* – U.S. investment grew rapidly in 2024 while China's and Europe's AI funding declined or stagnated <sup>29</sup>. The result is that the U.S. accounted for a dominant share of global AI spending (both corporate and VC), whereas other regions lag significantly:

- **China:** Chinese AI investment *contracted* in the past two years amid tighter tech regulations. In 2024 China's ~\$9.3B in private AI investment was down from prior peaks <sup>29</sup>. Nonetheless, China continues to invest heavily through state-sponsored programs and leads in some areas (like AI research publications and industrial robotics) – but in terms of **startup funding and corporate AI spend, China was only ~7-8% of the U.S. level in 2024** <sup>29</sup>.
- **Europe (incl. UK):** European nations collectively contributed a modest portion of AI investment. The UK's \$4.5B was Europe's single largest, with other EU countries adding a few billion more <sup>28</sup>. Estimates suggest **total EU+UK private AI investment was on the order of \$10–15B in 2024**, i.e. under 15% of the global total. Europe's venture funding in AI was roughly flat year-on-year, with robust activity in areas like enterprise AI and fintech, but it did not experience the same boom as the U.S. <sup>24</sup>.
- **Rest of World:** A handful of other countries saw notable AI investments – e.g. **Israel** (a longtime AI innovation hub) and **Canada** each have AI startup ecosystems that attracted a few billion in funding in 2024 <sup>30</sup>. But no other country came close to the U.S. surge. According to Crunchbase, **over three-quarters of all AI funding in 2024 went to U.S. companies** <sup>21</sup>, highlighting a significant geographic concentration of resources.

To summarize the stark contrast: **The world is investing hundreds of billions of dollars into AI technologies, while simultaneously millions of people are dying of hunger due to lack of a few dollars' worth of food.** The table and chart below compare key figures:

2024 Metric	Figure (2024)
<b>Global hunger-related deaths</b> (annual)	~ <b>9,000,000</b> people/year <sup>1</sup>
<b>Global hunger-related deaths</b> (daily avg.)	~ <b>25,000</b> people/day <sup>2</sup>
<b>Global AI investment (corporate + private)</b>	~ <b>\$252.3</b> billion <sup>13</sup>
– of which, <b>AI startup VC funding</b>	~ <b>\$100</b> billion <sup>18</sup>
– of which, <b>Generative AI funding</b>	~ <b>\$33.9</b> billion <sup>25</sup>
<b>AI investment – United States</b>	<b>\$109.1</b> billion <sup>31</sup>
<b>AI investment – China</b>	<b>\$9.3</b> billion <sup>31</sup>
<b>AI investment – United Kingdom</b>	<b>\$4.5</b> billion <sup>31</sup>
<b>AI-related M&amp;A deal value</b> (global)	~ <b>\$50</b> billion <sup>14</sup>

*Figure: Global hunger-related deaths vs. AI investment in 2024. Approximately 9 million people died of hunger in 2024 (~25k per day), whereas about \$250+ billion was invested in AI that year. Each hunger death is a human tragedy that might be averted with resources far smaller than those flowing into advanced technology.* <sup>1</sup> <sup>13</sup>

Overall, **2024** illustrated a grim paradox: despite ample global wealth and food production, hunger killed millions of people, even as record sums were spent on AI innovations. Bridging this gap – by directing a fraction of AI-era prosperity or investment toward fighting hunger – remains a pressing moral challenge. As the World Food Programme's director aptly noted, *"In a world of wealth...9 million people dying of hunger every year is a shame on us"* <sup>32</sup> <sup>33</sup>. The data from 2024 puts this into stark relief, contrasting the urgent need for basic human sustenance with humanity's rapid pursuit of technological advancement.

**Sources:** Global hunger mortality estimates from Concern Worldwide and UN/WFP <sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup>; acute hunger data from WHO/FAO and UNICEF <sup>1</sup> <sup>9</sup>; AI investment figures from Stanford's 2025 AI Index report <sup>13</sup> <sup>28</sup>, Crunchbase funding analyses <sup>34</sup>, and Oxfam/Al Jazeera for conflict-related hunger <sup>5</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> <sup>8</sup> <sup>10</sup> <sup>11</sup> World hunger facts: What you need to know in 2025

<https://concernusa.org/news/world-hunger-facts/>

<sup>2</sup> <sup>3</sup> <sup>4</sup> How Many People and Children Starve to Death Every Day

<https://sapa-usa.org/daily-hunger-deaths/>

<sup>5</sup> <sup>6</sup> <sup>7</sup> Global conflicts driving up to 21,000 deaths daily from hunger: Oxfam | Food News | Al Jazeera

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<sup>9</sup> A global food crisis | World Food Programme

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<sup>12</sup> World hunger facts: What you need to know in 2024 (and 2025) | Concern Worldwide

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<sup>13</sup> <sup>25</sup> <sup>28</sup> <sup>31</sup> Economy | The 2025 AI Index Report | Stanford HAI

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