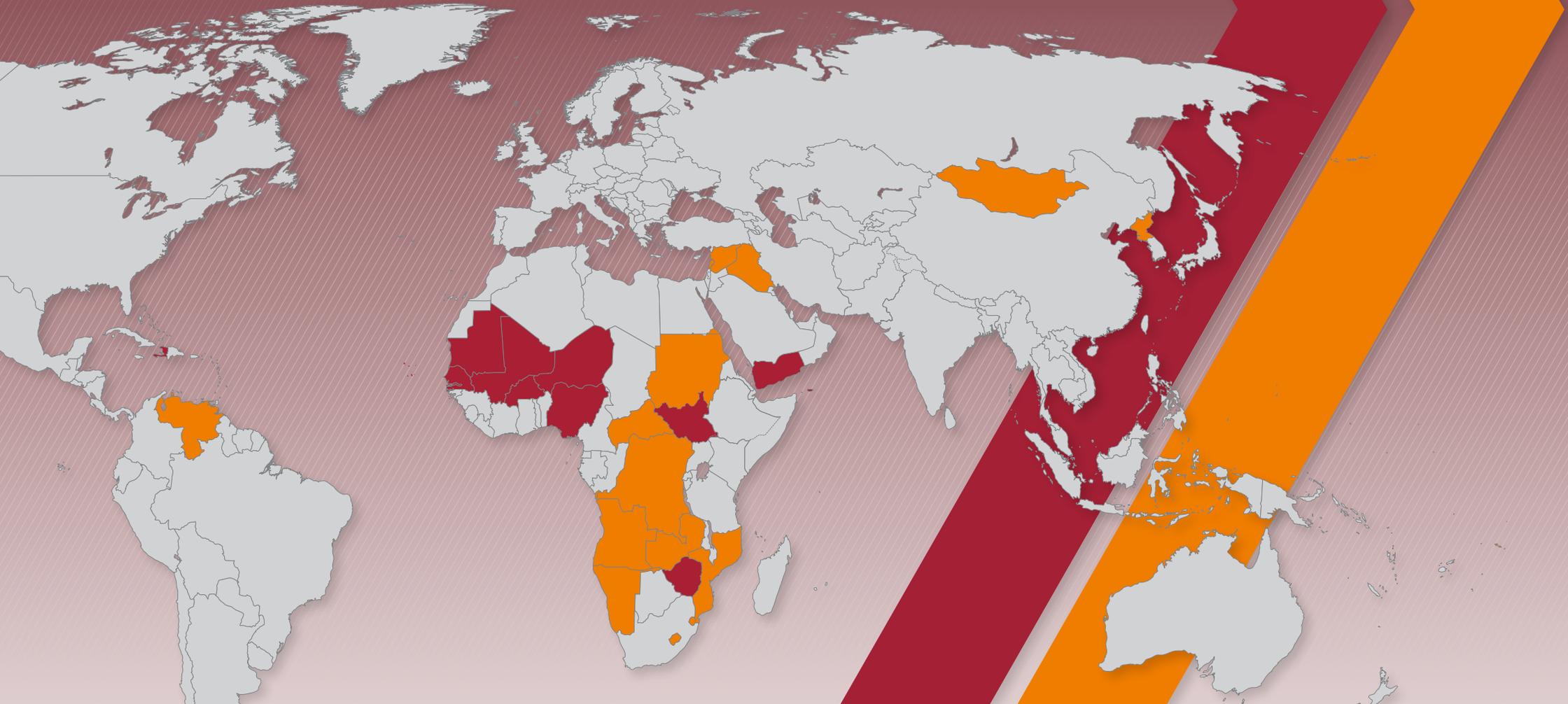




Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Early Warning Early Action Report on Food Security and Agriculture

2020
January–March



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Overview

Efficient humanitarian assistance requires anticipation. For FAO, this means harnessing risk information systems to act faster and avert acute hunger.

Qu Dongyu
FAO Director-General

The **Early Warning Early Action (EWEA) Report on Food Security and Agriculture** is produced by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). It provides a quarterly forward-looking analysis of major disaster risks to food security and agriculture, specifically highlighting:

- potential new emergencies resulting from imminent disaster threats
- new developments in countries already affected by protracted crises which are likely to cause a further deterioration of food insecurity

This report is part of FAO's efforts to systematically link early warnings to anticipatory actions. By providing specific early action recommendations for each country, the report aims to prompt FAO and partners to proactively mitigate and/or prevent disasters before they start to adversely impact food security.

High risk

Countries are categorized as “high risk” when there is a high likelihood of a new emergency or a significant deterioration of the current situation with potentially severe effects on agriculture and food security.

On watch

Countries categorized as “on watch” instead have a comparatively more moderate likelihood and/or potential impact, requiring close monitoring.

This report represents a summary and a prioritization of analysis provided by FAO's corporate and joint multi-agency information and early warning systems:

- Global Information and Early Warning System on Food and Agriculture (GIEWS)
- Food Chain Crisis and Emergency Prevention System (FCC-EMPRES)
- Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) and *Cadre Harmonisé* (CH)

In addition to these, a number of other external sources are consulted. The list of sources is available on page vii.

Countries with ongoing emergency response efforts are not included in the report, unless there are signs of potential significant deterioration. An overview of countries worldwide with humanitarian response plans or emergency plans is provided on page vi.

More details on the risk ranking methodology and the early action recommendations are provided on page ii.

The *Global Report on Food Crises 2019* highlights that around 113 million people in 53 countries faced acute food insecurity in 2018. Urgent humanitarian assistance is required to save lives and protect livelihoods. For more information go to:
▶ www.fsinplatform.org/sites/default/files/resources/files/GRFC_2019-Full_Report.pdf

The 2020 issue of the *Global Report* will be published in April.

Methodology

Risk value

High risk

FAO and partners should start implementing early actions on a no-regrets basis

On watch

FAO should strengthen corporate monitoring, preparedness and plan for the implementation of certain low cost early actions

The countries and regions flagged in this report are selected through a consultative process led by early warning focal points from the EWEA, GIEWS, FCC-EMPRES and IPC teams. The main steps of the process are:

1. Shortlist countries flagged by FAO's corporate early warning systems, IPC and *Cadre Harmonisé*
2. Triangulate risk information with other datasets and external early warning systems
3. Verify and rank the final list of risks based on the following three criteria:
 - **Likelihood of occurrence** is classified into five levels (very unlikely, unlikely, moderately likely, likely and very likely). The term likelihood applies to the probability that, within the time period considered, either a new disaster risk or the significant deterioration of the situation will occur.
 - **Potential impact** is classified into five levels (negligible, minor, moderate, severe and critical). The impact is analysed both in terms of magnitude (the number of potentially affected people and/or geographical extent of the impact on agriculture, livelihoods and food security) and severity (the gravity of the impact on agriculture, livelihoods and food security, especially in relation to pre-existing vulnerability and food insecurity).
 - **Country capacity** to cope with and respond to potential disasters or deteriorated situations is also classified into five levels (very low, low, medium, high and very high). The Index for Risk Management (INFORM) is further applied to measure the coping capacity of a country.

Famine declared and famine likely

As per the IPC new guidelines, 'famine' classification is mentioned when famine is currently occurring in an area and at least 20 percent of the population (or 10 000 people) are facing catastrophic conditions. The new classification 'famine likely' is mentioned when famine is likely occurring and while evidence indicates a famine, it is not adequate to confirm or deny the condition. Furthermore, when further deterioration of the situation might lead to a risk of famine, this aspect is highlighted in the global risk map and narrative of the report as 'risk of famine'.

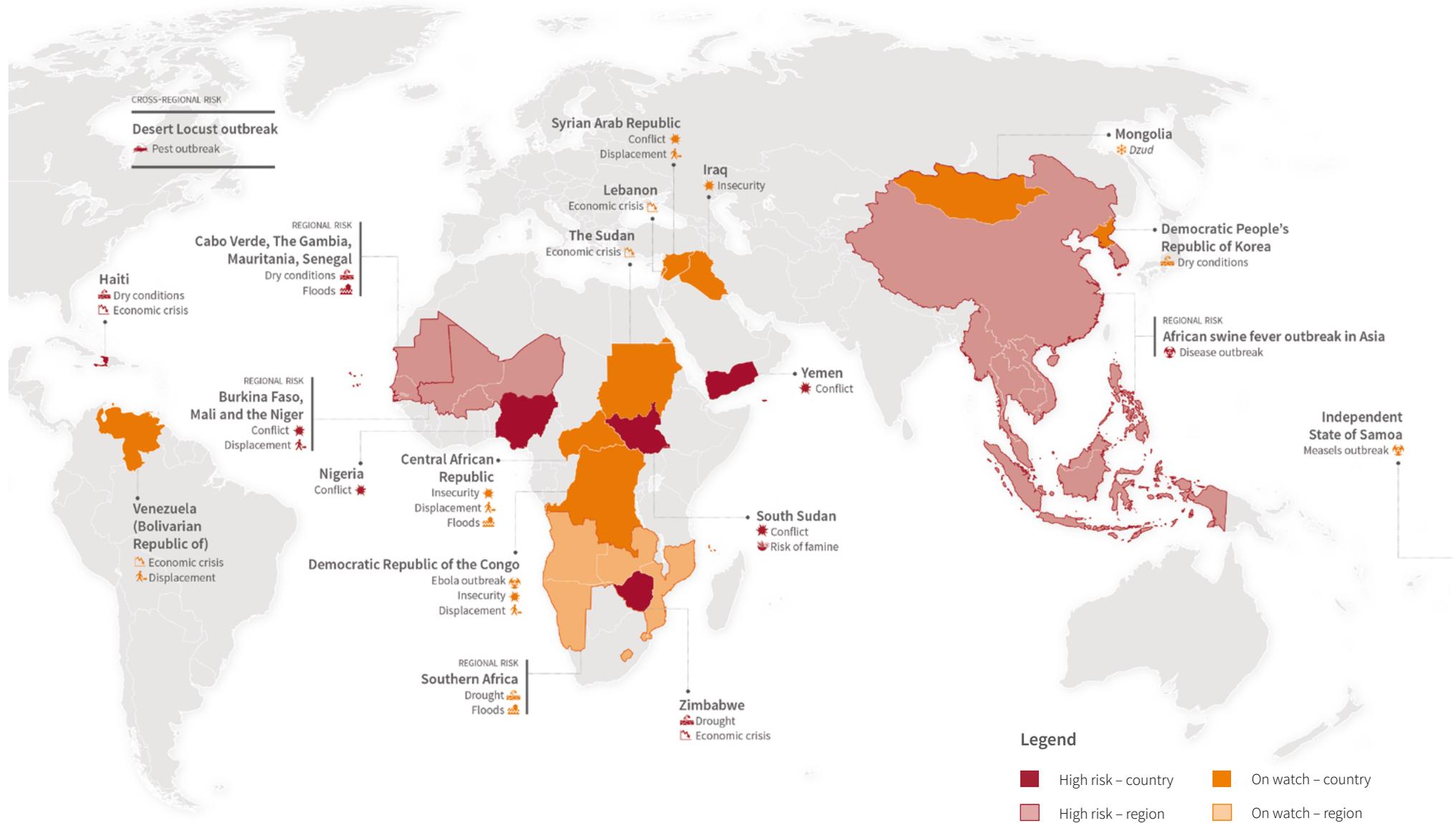
Recommendations for early actions

Early action recommendations are indicated for each risk that is featured in this report. They outline a range of the most appropriate interventions over the coming months which could prevent, mitigate or prepare for the potential impact of a specific disaster on the agriculture sector and livelihoods. The interventions are also sector specific and non-binding in nature. Early actions can vary from activities aiming to protect livelihood assets to planning and preparatory activities. The recommendations are developed by FAO through a consultative process involving technical experts and FAO country, subregional and regional offices.

Global risk map

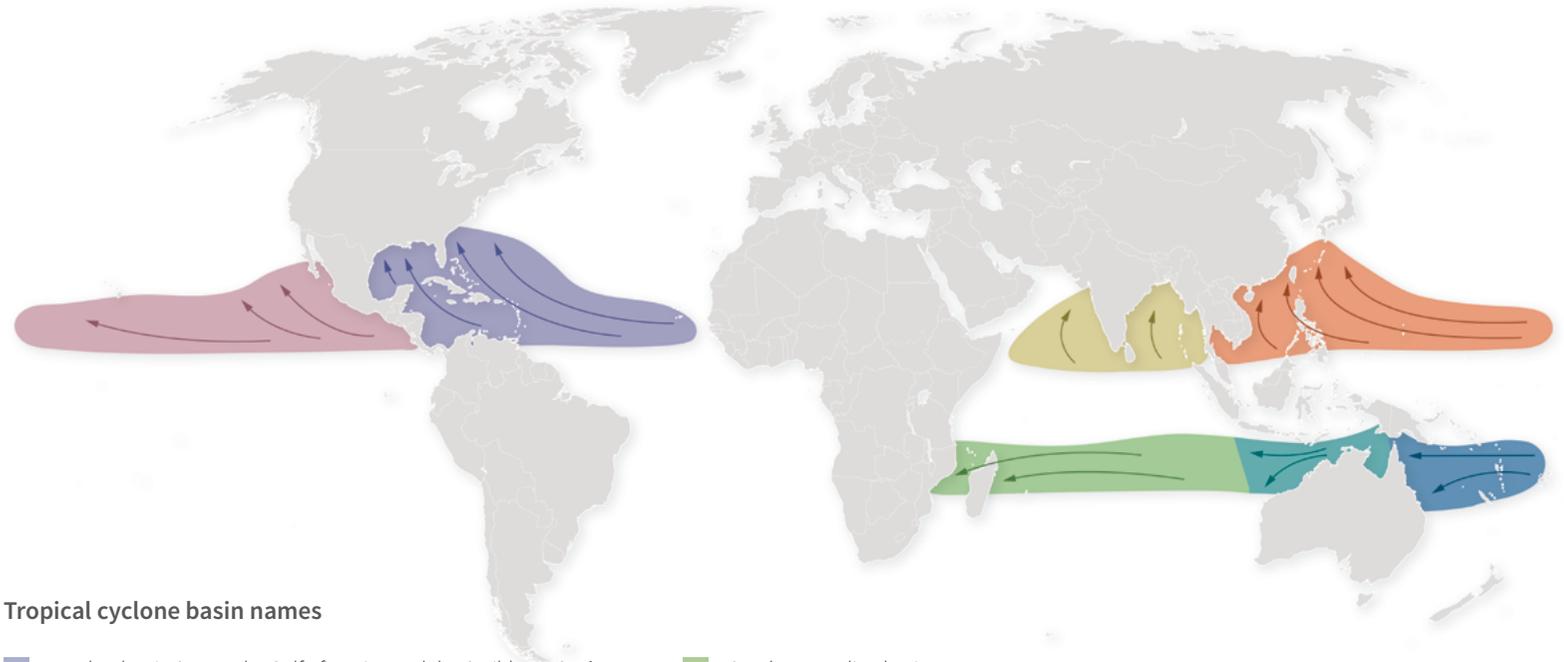
The map on page iii provides a visualization of major disaster risks to food security and agriculture in the indicated reporting period. When a new emergency or deterioration of the current situation is very likely and might have severe impacts, it is indicated as "high risk". In case of moderate to high likelihood and moderate and significant impact, the risk is listed as "on watch". Ongoing humanitarian crises, such as protracted emergencies, are not highlighted in this report unless a deterioration is likely.

Global risk map: January–March 2020



Cyclone seasonality

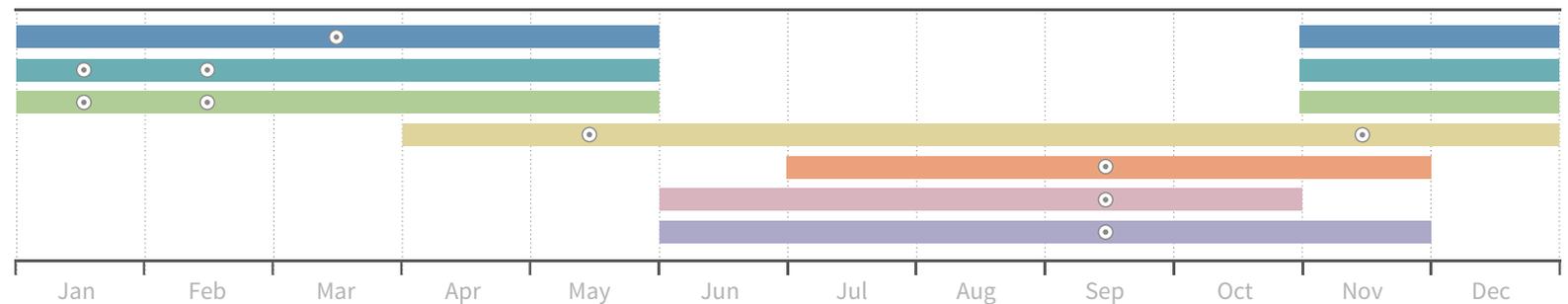
This map provides an overview of the timeline of cyclone formations and their historical tracks. There are seven tropical cyclone basins, with specific peak timings during the calendar year. When available, the seasonal forecast (below- or above-average cyclone activity) is also provided.



Tropical cyclone basin names

- North Atlantic Ocean, the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea¹
- Northeast Pacific basin
- Northwest Pacific basin
- North Indian basin
- Southwest Indian basin
- Southeast Indian/Australian Basin
- Australian/Southwest Pacific basin
- Peak

Seasonality calendar



¹Tropical Storm Risk (TSR) extended range forecast for North Atlantic hurricane activity in 2020 anticipates a season with activity close to the long-term norm. The forecast spans the period from 1 June to 30 November 2020 and employs data through to the end of November 2019.

Source: United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 2019

Animal health threats potentially affecting food security

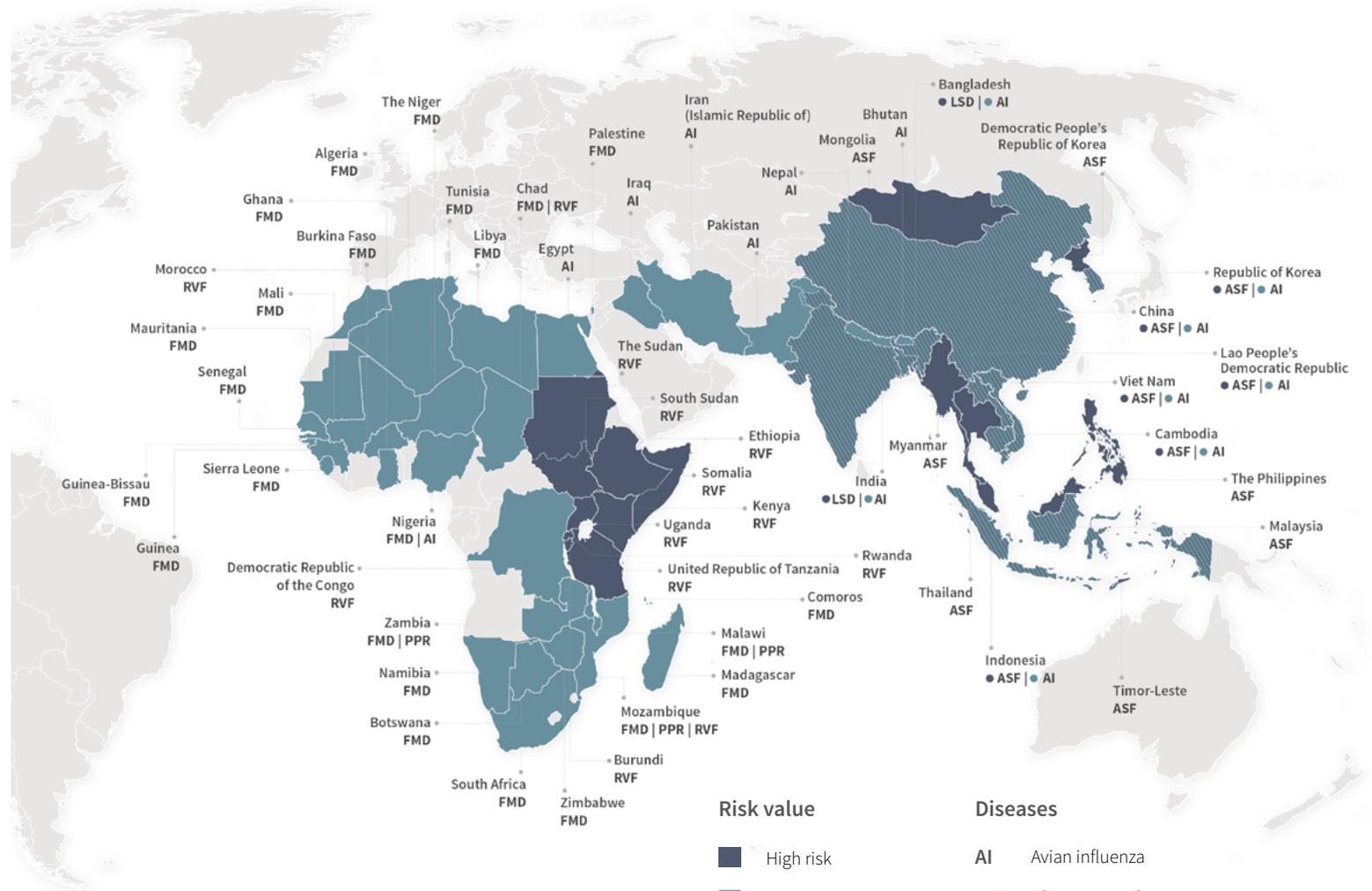
This map highlights selected countries facing animal health threats during the reporting period.

Countries are only highlighted if the threat is considered to have the potential to impact food security.*

For a complete list of countries and threats, and more detailed information see:

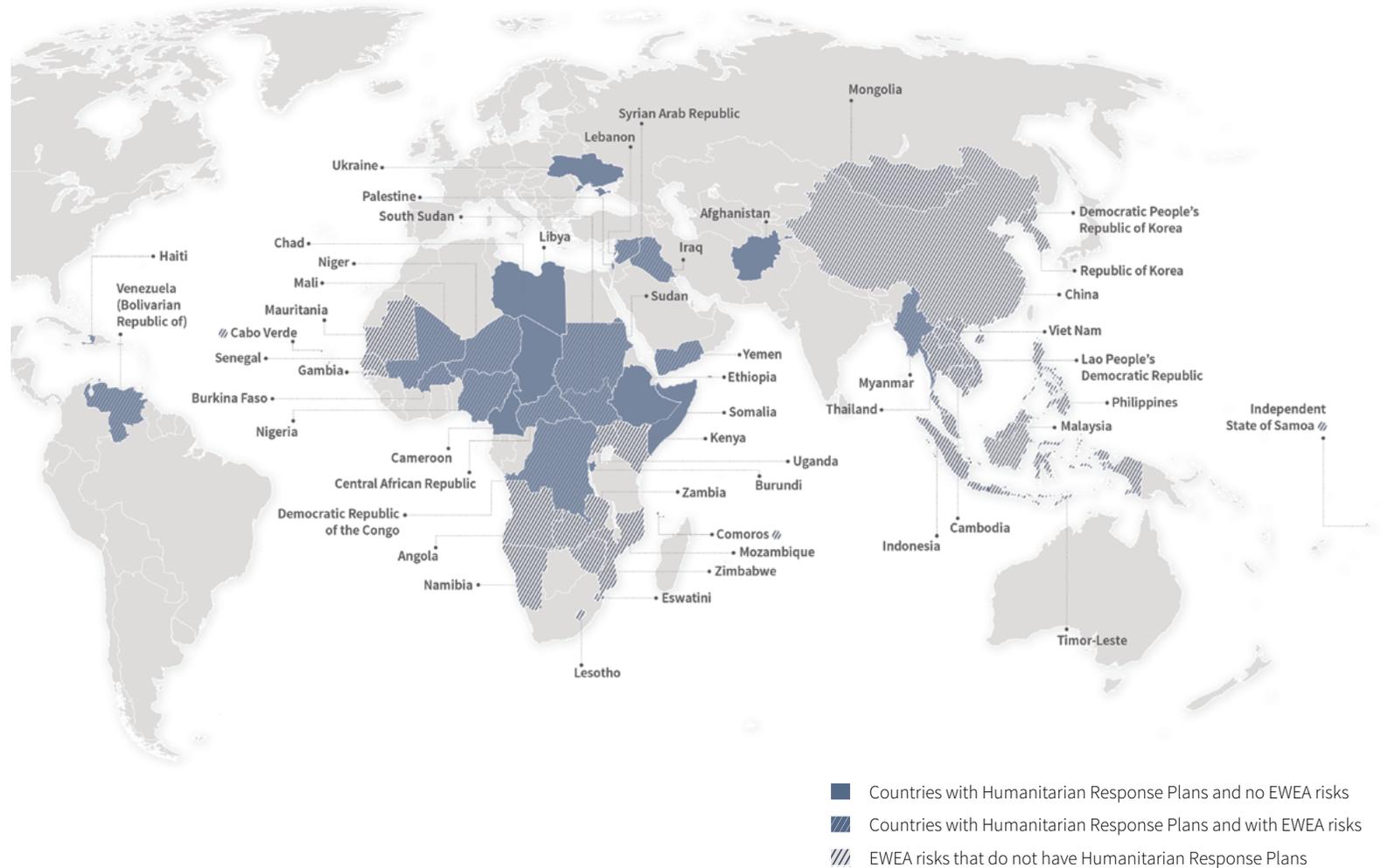
www.fao.org/food-chain-crisis/early-warning-bulletin/en/

*The information used to compile this map was extracted from the Food Chain Crisis Management Framework (FCC) Early Warning Bulletin for the period January–March 2020. The information was compiled as of 20 December 2019. Please consult the bulletin for a more extensive analysis of threats to animal health globally.



EWEA risks within the wider humanitarian context

The EWEA report exclusively highlights new emergencies in food and agriculture and ongoing crises in which a potential significant deterioration is likely. The report does not cover ongoing crises with no indication of an upcoming deterioration. This map shows countries flagged by the report compared to countries with Humanitarian Response Plans in 2020, in which we do not foresee a marked deterioration.



Source: Global Humanitarian Overview 2020, OCHA



Sources of information

This report consolidates information provided by GIEWS, FCC-EMPRES and IPC, as well as from external sources of information. The analytical basis for the prioritization of countries and the major sources of information and data presented in the report are three main groups of datasets:

- countries requiring external assistance and the food security situation of low-income food-deficit countries*
- forecasting threats to the food chain affecting food security in countries and regions**
- IPC and *Cadre Harmonisé* acute food security analysis

Additional information and data presented in the report are consolidated from the following external sources (including but not limited to):

- reports and bulletins by agencies of the United Nations (UN), in particular the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Food Programme's (WFP) Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping Unit and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO)
- updates from external sources including Index for Risk Management (INFORM), Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), International Research Institute for Climate and Society – Columbia University (IRI), Reliefweb, local and international media

*Crop Prospects and Food Situation Bulletin, and Crop and Food Security Assessment Missions (CFSAM), GIEWS

**Food Chain Crisis Early Warning Bulletin, FCC-EMPRES, Animal Production and Health Early Warning Systems Team



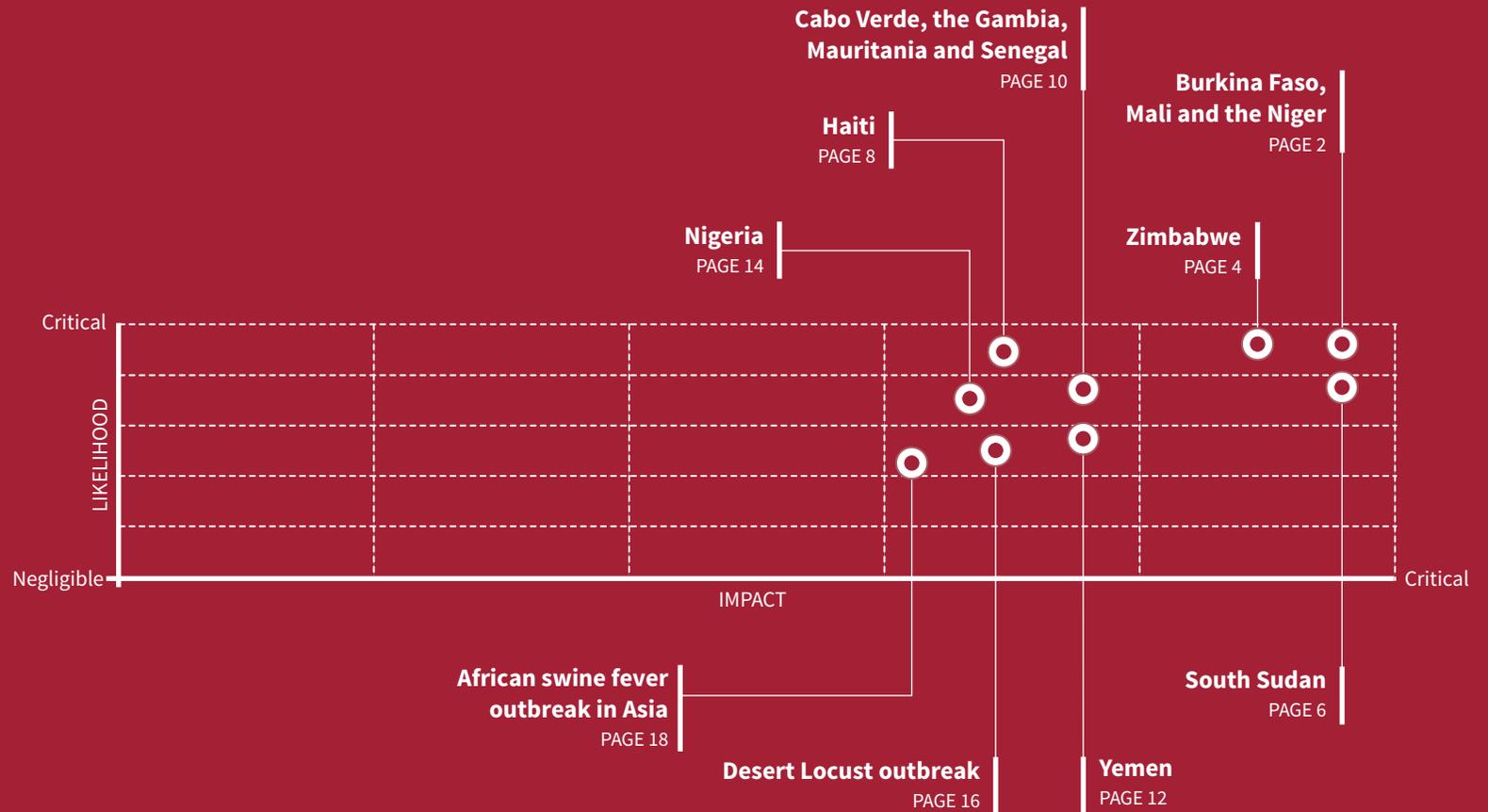
High levels of insecurity in parts of Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger have been severely affecting agropastoral activities and market functioning. Population displacement and food insecurity are strongly increasing, especially in Burkina Faso. Vulnerable displaced people, host communities and people in insecure areas are likely to require food assistance and livelihood support for most of 2020.

High risk

The matrix provides an overview of the ranking of risks featured in this report. The risks are prioritized based on the severity, likelihood and magnitude of their impact, while also balanced against the countries' individual coping capacity.

In order of intensity, for the period January–March 2020, the **high risk** section includes:

- Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger
- Zimbabwe
- South Sudan
- Haiti
- Cabo Verde, the Gambia, Mauritania and Senegal
- Yemen
- Nigeria
- Desert Locust outbreak
- African swine fever outbreak in Asia





Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger

High levels of insecurity affecting agropastoral activities, leading to increasing displacement and food insecurity



Over **3.2 million** people severely food insecure and **4.7 million** people projected to be severely food insecure during the lean season (June–August 2020) in the three countries



1.2 million people severely food insecure in Burkina Faso (October–December 2019) – double compared with the 2019 lean season



Nearly **1 million** internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the three countries as a result of escalation of conflict



Risk overview

- The food security and livelihood crisis is escalating at an alarming pace across Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger. High levels of insecurity in parts of the three countries have been affecting agropastoral activities throughout the entire season as well as market functioning.
- Inter-community and armed group violence has been extremely frequent in numerous regions of Mali (Gao and Mopti), Burkina Faso (Centre-North, East, North, Sahel and Boucle du Mouhoun) and the Niger (Diffa, Tahoua and Tillabéri). As of December 2019, the unprecedented crisis had led to a sharp increase in the number of displaced people, reaching around 945 000 IDPs and over 270 000 refugees.
- While during October–December food insecurity levels usually decrease as this period corresponds to the harvest season, the latest *Cadre Harmonisé* analysis (November 2019) points to a worsening situation in all three countries. Figures remain high and have even doubled compared with the lean season in the case of Burkina Faso, for instance, reaching 1.2 million people. Figures are above the five-year average in the Niger with 1.4 million people severely food insecure and in Mali, reaching 648 000 people.
- While cereal production prospects in each of the three countries are generally either within the average or above the five-year average, insecurity has strongly impacted agricultural production in affected areas. In Mopti, for instance, a 49-percent decrease in production is expected. In Burkina Faso, agricultural activities for the 2019/20 cropping season have dropped by 20–70 percent in

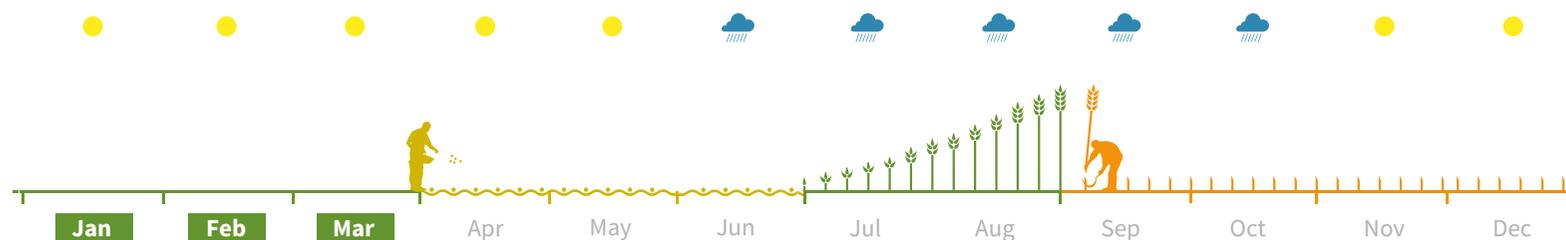
crisis-affected areas where there has been a 50-percent drop in land cultivation compared with the previous season.

- Despite close-to-average rainfall across the three countries, limited pasture conditions are observed in several areas. In the Niger, vegetation deficits are recorded particularly in Diffa, Maradi, Tahoua, Tillabéri and Zinder, with a national deficit reaching over 11.3 million tonnes of dry matter. The western Kayes region of Mali is also affected by pasture deficits, as well as several areas of the Boucle du Mouhoun, East and Center-North regions of Burkina Faso.



Potential impact

- Vulnerable displaced people, host communities and people in insecure areas are likely to require food assistance and livelihood support for most of 2020. The latest *Cadre Harmonisé* projections for June–August 2020 are alarming in all three countries, with 1.7 million people severely food insecure (Phases 3–5) in Burkina Faso, 1.1 million in Mali and 1.9 million in the Niger.
- The pastoral situation in areas affected by deficits is worrying particularly in Burkina Faso and the Niger, as most of these areas are also affected by conflict. In particular, in the Centre-Nord and East regions of Burkina Faso, the significant concentration of displaced pastoralists with livestock in areas with limited resources poses an additional risk, affecting social cohesion.
- Insecurity and conflict are likely to strongly affect pastoralists' movements and access to resources in the coming months, which mark the start of the dry season.



The food security and livelihood crisis is escalating at an alarming pace across the three countries. High levels of insecurity in parts of Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger have been affecting agropastoral activities across the entire season as well as market functioning. Population displacement and food insecurity are also increasing, particularly in Burkina Faso. Displaced people and host communities will require continued food assistance and livelihood support throughout 2020.



Recommended early actions

From January to March, the following early actions are recommended in order to provide immediate livelihood support to displaced, host and refugee populations, as well as to contribute to reducing the risk of conflict over resources. In Burkina Faso, it is crucial to strengthen rapid evaluation and response mechanisms to address the needs of affected populations.

Cash and food assistance

- Scale-up food and nutritional assistance to vulnerable people in need among IDP and host communities.
- Safeguard IDP and host communities' livelihoods through unconditional cash transfers, and support women and youth in initiating income-generating activities.

Crops

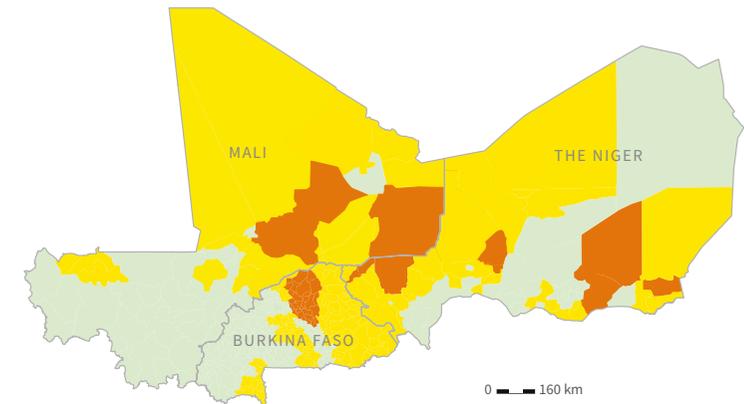
- Support IDP and host populations through cash-for-work activities focused on the rehabilitation of rural infrastructure and degraded lands.
- Provide vegetable seeds and agricultural inputs for home-gardening.
- Boost dry-season agricultural production in Burkina Faso.

Livestock

- Promote commercial destocking for weak animals in areas with high concentration of livestock and limited access to pasture.
- Provide water and feed to core-breeding stock, and establish feed stocks.
- Support the provision of animal health services, particularly vaccination and deworming.
- Rehabilitate pastoral wells by prioritizing solar-energy-based equipment.
- Advocate for access to pasture and water for displaced populations' livestock.

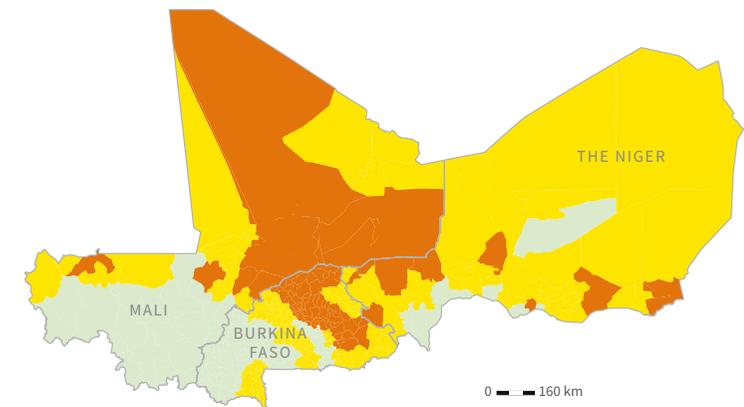
Current acute food insecurity situation

(October–December 2019)



Projected acute food insecurity situation

(June–August 2020)



CH phase classification



Source: *Cadre Harmonisé*, November 2019

Zimbabwe

Deteriorating macroeconomic conditions likely to continue and dry conditions forecast for a second consecutive season



The 2018/19 cropping season harvest is estimated to be **40 percent** below the five-year average



Around **5.5 million** people in rural areas will be in need of food and livelihood assistance between January and March 2020



Food insecurity likely to affect **2.2 million** people in urban areas



Risk overview

- Zimbabwe has experienced deteriorating food insecurity over the past two years, due chiefly to macroeconomic difficulties and significant shortfalls in cereal production caused by a severe drought and Cyclone Idai in 2019. As a result, humanitarian needs are increasing in the country.
- Since October 2018, foreign currency deficits and the plummeting value of the Zimbabwean currency have caused import costs to rise. As of November 2019, Zimbabwe had recorded a high inflation rate of 440 percent.
- Macroeconomic difficulties have also hampered the country's ability to access grains from the international market, with further adverse effects on domestic supplies and prices. For example, bread and rice have registered their highest prices since the period of hyperinflation in 2008, leading to severe constraints on household access to food.
- In addition, adverse weather conditions ranging from substantial rainfall deficits to the impact of Cyclone Idai in eastern provinces have caused a sharp drop in the 2019 maize output. Limited access to agricultural inputs and outbreaks of pest diseases including fall armyworm have also affected production. Estimated at 800 000 tonnes, the harvest for the 2018/19 cropping season is around 40 percent below the five-year average.
- Furthermore, households relying on livestock as their main source of livelihood have had to contend with an increase

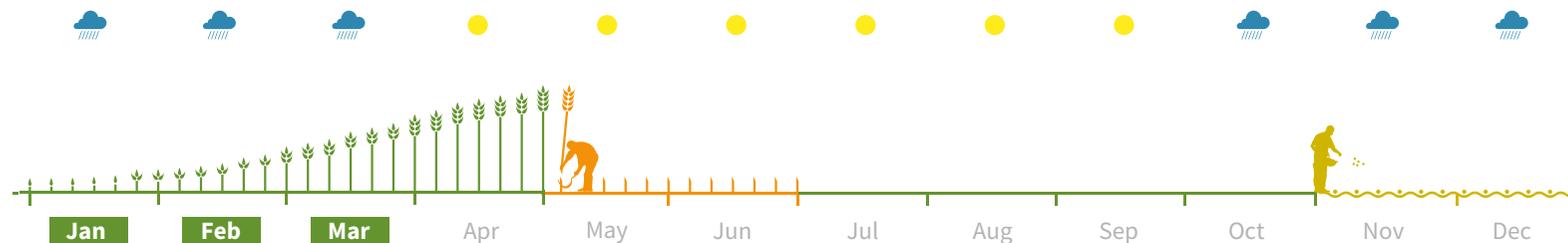
in animal diseases and limited veterinary support, with a significant proportion of livestock deaths attributed to these two factors. Severe drought conditions have also affected livestock body conditions and contributed to losses of animals. For example, the national cattle mortality rate for 2018/19 was at 18 percent – about 15 percent higher than an average year.

- Between October and December 2019, an estimated 3.6 million people were in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) level of food insecurity or worse and required urgent assistance. Most vulnerable households are considered to have depleted their food stocks, while hyperinflation further hampers their purchasing power and food access.



Potential impact

- For the October 2019 to March 2020 rainy season, estimates show some areas receiving between 9 and 40 percent below their long-term average rainfall. This has likely led to delays in planting and a reduction in planted area and labour opportunities, especially in areas severely affected during the previous season, which includes parts of Manicaland, Mashonaland West, Masvingo, Matabeleland North and Midlands. Current climate forecasts point to a higher chance of below-average rains, as well as above-average temperatures for the remainder of the season (January–March).



Over the past two years, Zimbabwe has experienced deteriorating food security and significant shortfalls in cereal production, due to macroeconomic difficulties, a severe drought and Cyclone Idai in 2019. As a result, humanitarian needs are increasing in the country.

- The ongoing macroeconomic challenges, increasing food prices and cash shortages are also likely to continue to affect the most vulnerable in urban and rural areas, further increasing their food expenditure.
- With prospects of a foreign currency shortage – mostly reflecting diminished export revenues – the country is likely to continue experiencing difficulties in procuring sufficient grain supplies or agricultural inputs from international markets.
- According to the Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee, about 5.5 million people will be in need of food and livelihood assistance at the peak of the lean season between January and March 2020 – around 3.1 million people more than the same time last year. In urban areas, food insecurity is likely to affect 2.2 million people.

Recommended early actions

Forecast rainfall deficits combined with deteriorating macroeconomic conditions and the impact of the El Niño-induced drought of 2018 call for early action to prevent further deterioration of food security conditions. Early actions should aim to support off-season crop production and protect livestock throughout the lean season in the most at-risk areas, including the provinces of Manicaland, Mashonaland Central, Mashonaland East, Mashonaland West, Masvingo, Matabeleland North and Midlands.

Crops

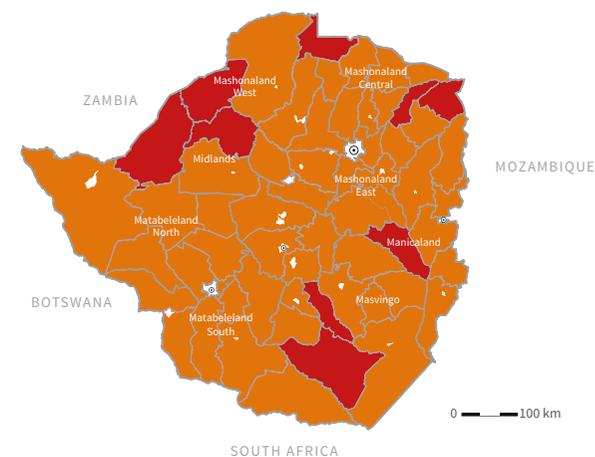
- Distribute fast-maturing nutritious vegetable seeds to the most food-insecure households for garden production in rural and (where feasible) urban areas.
- Provide superior storage equipment (e.g. hermetic bags) and train vulnerable smallholder farmers in managing post-harvest losses.

Livestock

- Provide necessary measures to control tick-borne diseases, in particular theileriosis, which has killed more than 80 000 cattle since December 2018.
- Rehabilitate or establish community watering points for livestock.
- Distribute poultry and small ruminants among the most food-insecure households in rural and (where feasible) urban areas.
- Distribute animal feed and mineral supplements to vulnerable pastoralists and livestock holders to keep their core breeding stock alive, especially in western parts of the country.

Acute food insecurity situation

(October–December 2019)



IPC phase classification

 5 - Famine	 3 - Crisis	 1 - Minimal	 Inadequate evidence
 4 - Emergency	 2 - Stressed	 Not analysed	 Urban settlement

Source: IPC, August 2019

high risk



South Sudan

Widespread flooding likely to worsen an already dire humanitarian situation



5.5 million people likely to face Crisis or worse levels of food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) between January and April 2020



Over **900 000** people affected by floods in the northern and eastern regions



Risk overview

- Some 4.54 million people (39 percent of the population) were projected to remain in Crisis or worse levels of food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 and above) during the September to December 2019 harvest period, including 875 000 people in Emergency (IPC Phase 4). This is expected to increase to 5.5 million people between January and April 2020. Duk, Longochuk, Maiwut and Ulang are of particular concern, with more than 20 percent of the populations in these counties facing Emergency (IPC Phase 4) level of food insecurity. The IPC analysis does not take into account the full impact of recent flooding that occurred in September and October.
- Heavy rainfall triggered widespread floods that have affected over 900 000 people, of whom about 420 000 have been displaced. Significant flood-induced crop losses were observed, especially in former Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Jonglei, Upper Nile and Warrap states, which have partly offset the favourable impacts of an increase in planted area compared to the previous year and high yields in areas not affected by floods. The preliminary results of the joint 2019 FAO/WFP Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission indicate that 2019 aggregate cereal production is estimated to be higher than the poor 2018 output, but still below the five-year average.
- Flooding has also impacted over 3 million heads of livestock, causing livestock deaths, loss of pasture, reduced milk

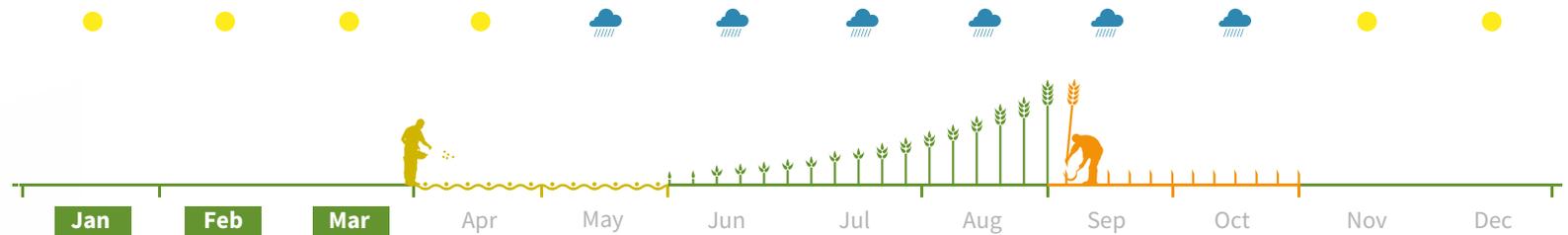
production, as well as an increase in some livestock diseases and a more favourable environment for others. The floods resulted in the substantial destruction of pastures and animal deaths due to starvation.

- The Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, signed in September 2018, resulted in significant security improvements. However, 1.47 million people continue to be internally displaced. As the next rainy season sets in, an escalation of conflict due to cattle raiding is likely to occur.
- In Juba, prices of maize and sorghum increased by 35 and 50 percent, respectively, between June and October 2019. Prices in October were exceptionally steep, at 60 percent higher than last year's levels and more than 15 times above those of July 2015 (GIEWS).



Potential impact

- Between January and April 2020, 5.5 million people will likely face Crisis or worse levels of food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above), up 21 percent compared to the September to December period. Additionally, 14 counties are projected to face Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes, up by ten counties compared to late 2019.



Food insecurity remains at severe levels in South Sudan. The most recent IPC analysis projects that 5.5 million people are likely to face Crisis or worse levels of food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) between January and April 2020. This analysis, however, was completed prior to the recent flooding that has affected over 900 000 people.



Recommended early actions

Targeted actions can help prevent further deterioration in food security, particularly in areas affected by conflict and flooding. In the January–March period, early action should support off-season crop production and alternative income-generating activities. Potential outbreaks of animal diseases (including zoonoses) following rains and flooding should be prevented by providing adequate support to vulnerable pastoralists. Given that conflict is a key driver of food insecurity in South Sudan, early warning activities should factor in conflict sensitivity in their design.

Crops

- Distribute fast-maturing crop seeds (cowpea and vegetable) to vulnerable farmers in lowland areas with access to surface water or residual soil moisture from receding floodwater.
- Closely monitor crop diseases and pests and train farmers on mitigation measures (e.g. pheromone traps).

Fisheries

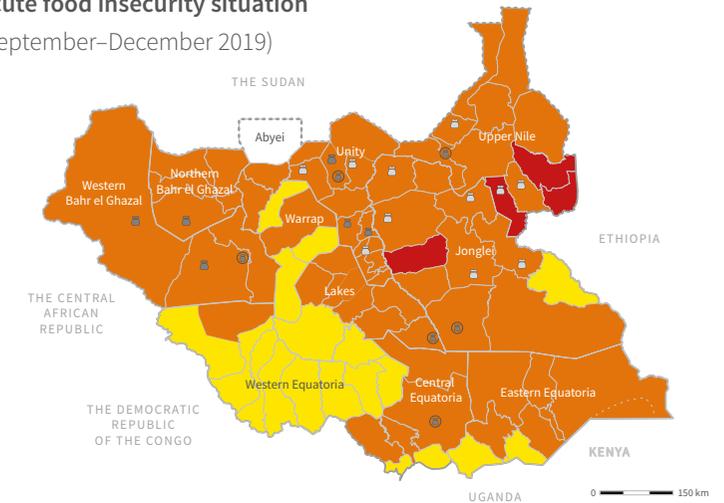
- Distribute fishing kits to flood-affected and severely food-insecure households in riverine and lake areas to support diversified diets and food production.

Livestock

- Strengthen solar vaccine cold chain networks and preposition vaccines and veterinary drugs in locations potentially affected by animal disease outbreaks.
- Conduct deworming, vaccination and animal treatment campaigns targeting vulnerable pastoralists' livestock through networks of community animal health workers.
- Enhance Rift Valley fever-related actions, including surveillance, awareness campaigns, training in case of detection, etc.
- Introduce improved (fast-growing) fodder crops, e.g. Sudan grass for agropastoral households to grow, conserve and feed livestock, and total mixed ration to feed livestock.

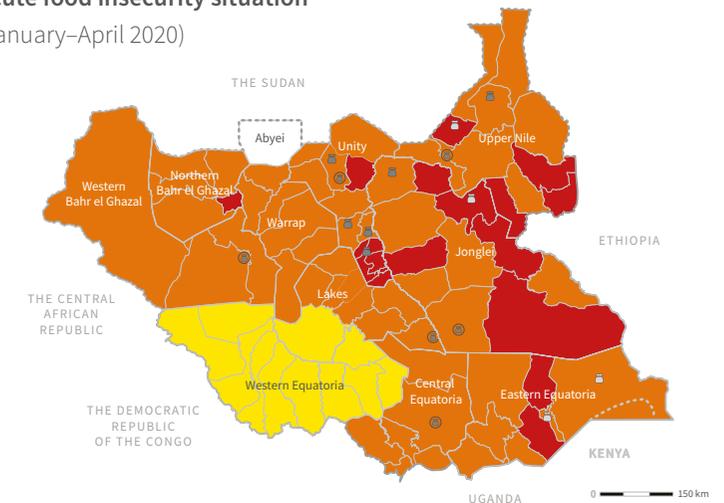
Acute food insecurity situation

(September–December 2019)



Acute food insecurity situation

(January–April 2020)



IPC phase classification

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 5 - Famine | Not analysed | At least 25% of households meet 25–50% of caloric needs from humanitarian food assistance |
| 4 - Emergency | Inadequate evidence | At least 25% of households meet over 50% of caloric needs from humanitarian food assistance |
| 3 - Crisis | Urban settlement | |
| 2 - Stressed | | |
| 1 - Minimal | | |

Source: IPC, August 2019

high risk

Haiti

Deteriorating food security in rural and urban areas driven by economic crisis and dry conditions

 Nearly **3.7 million** people severely food insecure (October 2019–February 2020)

 **4.1 million** people projected to be severely food insecure (March–June 2020)

Risk overview

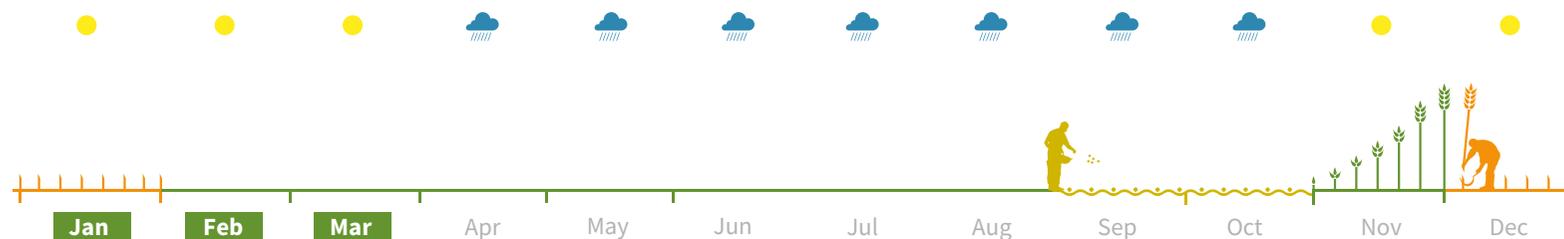
- A protracted economic crisis and increased insecurity since September 2019, coupled with dry conditions that affected the 2018/19 main cropping season, are causing the deterioration of the food security situation in Haiti. Although the socio-political situation has slightly improved in most regions since mid-November, allowing for transportation and commercial activities to resume, the situation remains highly unpredictable.
- The latest IPC analysis (October 2019) estimates that nearly 3.7 million people (35 percent of the total population) are severely food insecure (October 2019–February 2020). This comprises households in both rural and urban areas. In the urban area of Port-au-Prince, the food security situation is similar to that in rural areas, or even worse, particularly in the poorest neighbourhoods of the metropolitan area. Nearly one-third of urban households are estimated to be in urgent need of food assistance.
- The main maize production season in Haiti typically takes place between March and July. Dry conditions and insecurity contributed to a 12.3-percent reduction in agricultural production in 2019 compared with already below-average levels in 2018.
- Rising staple food prices, with annual food inflation at approximately 22.6 percent, a nearly 38-percent depreciation of the local currency against the US dollar in 2019 coupled with unrest and insecurity, have significantly reduced access to food.

Potential impact

- According to the latest IPC analysis (October 2019), 4.1 million people (40 percent of the total population) are projected to be severely food insecure during the period going from March to June 2020, which includes the lean season (April–May). In the October 2018 analysis, which only included households in rural areas, 2.6 million people were estimated to be severely food insecure in March–June 2019 (38 percent of the rural population) compared with 3.1 million (42 percent of the rural population) during next year’s projection (March–June 2020).
- The political and macroeconomic crisis is expected to further reduce households’ already low purchasing power during the coming months. Mass protests and episodes of violence may persist.
- Seasonal rains have generally been regular since the beginning of December, with few areas experiencing rainfall deficits. This could favour the second maize production season. However, the outcome of the second season accounts for only a minor portion of annual production and it is expected to only marginally improve food availability.

Recommended early actions

The combined effect of last year’s El Niño-induced drought, and of the political and economic crisis is likely to lead to the further



A protracted economic crisis, coupled with dry conditions that affected the 2018/19 main cropping season, are causing a significant deterioration of the food security situation in Haiti. The escalation of unrest since September 2019 has resulted in increased insecurity.

deterioration of the food security situation unless early actions are taken. The period from January to March is particularly critical for early action as it precedes the main cropping season.

Crops

- Provide timely climate-resilient crop seeds, agricultural tools and training on good agricultural practices to vulnerable farmers affected by drought in the Artibonite, Grand'Anse, Nippes North-West and West departments.
- Provide timely vegetable seeds, fruit seedlings, agricultural tools and technical support to unemployed people (especially women and girls heads of households) affected by the political and socio-economic crisis in urban and peri-urban areas of Cap Haitien, Cayes, Gonaive, Port au Prince and Port de Paix.

Livestock

The following early actions should target severely food-insecure agropastoralists in drought-affected areas in the North-West, North-East, South-East and Centre departments.

- Distribute planting material by March for forage production.
- Establish mobile veterinary clinics to provide animal health services to vulnerable livestock producers.
- Distribute small livestock (goat and poultry).

Cash

- Implement cash-for-work activities targeting vulnerable rural households without agricultural land, to rehabilitate and protect agricultural infrastructure for water management in drought-affected areas in the Grand'Anse, Nippes, North-East, North-West, South-East, South and West departments.

Fisheries and aquaculture

- Distribute fishing equipment by March to vulnerable fishing households near hill lakes.

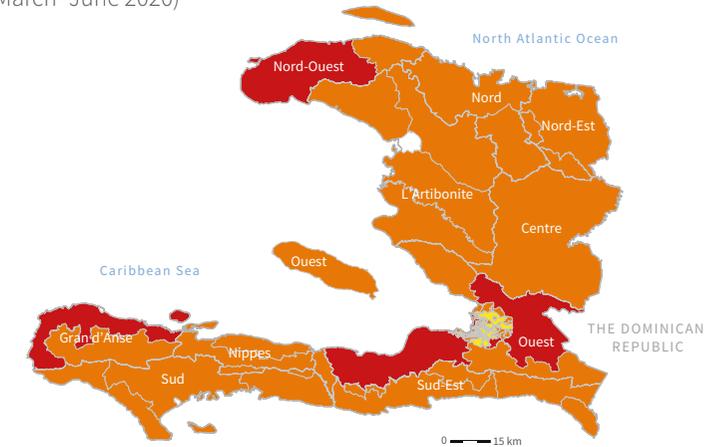
Current acute food insecurity situation

(October 2019–February 2020)



Projected acute food insecurity situation

(March–June 2020)



IPC phase classification

■ 5 - Famine	■ 3 - Crisis	■ 1 - Minimal	■ Inadequate evidence
■ 4 - Emergency	■ 2 - Stressed	□ Not analysed	

Source: IPC, October 2019



Cabo Verde, the Gambia, Mauritania and Senegal

Drought and localized floods affecting agricultural and livestock production for another consecutive year



845 000 people severely food insecure (October–December 2019) in the Gambia, Mauritania and Senegal, and nearly **1.7 million** projected (June–August 2020) – both figures above the long-term average



Production levels of vegetation in some areas of Mauritania and Senegal are among the lowest recorded in the last 20 years



Risk overview

- The outcome of the 2019 rainy season was negative in several countries along the Atlantic coast of West Africa due to poor and erratic distribution of rainfall, particularly in Cabo Verde, the Gambia, Mauritania and Senegal.
- The levels of severe food insecurity (October–December 2019) are alarming due to drought. *Cadre Harmonisé* figures for people classified in Phase 3 and above are well over the five-year average in the Gambia (187 000 people), Mauritania (299 000 people) and in Senegal (359 000 people); and in Cabo Verde there are around 9 870 people in Phase 3.
- As of late September, 73 percent of hydro-meteorological stations in Mauritania registered severe rainfall deficits compared with the long-term average (1981–2010). Along with delayed rains and dry spells in affected areas, this affected seed germination and crop growth for rainfed crops, whose production estimates are 17 percent lower than the five-year average.
- In Senegal, the negative outcome of the rainy season triggered funding from the African Risk Capacity to the Government of Senegal and humanitarian partners in order to mitigate the impact of the drought.
- Agricultural production estimates of rainfed crops in Cabo Verde and the Gambia are worrying. Maize production in Cabo Verde is expected to decrease by 80 percent, while cereal and cash crop production in the Gambia are expected to diminish by 46 and 70 percent, respectively, compared with the five-year average.
- The end of season analysis for grasslands carried out by *Action Contre la Faim* highlights a worrying situation in several cross-border areas of southwestern Mauritania and northern Senegal. In Mauritania, most of the country, and particularly western areas, are experiencing pasture deficits, while eastern areas of Assaba and west of Hodh El Gharbi have positive outcomes. In Senegal, strong deficits are registered in Louga, Matam, Saint-Louis, Kaffrine, Kaolak and Diourbel.



Potential impact

- The pastoral situation is severe in several areas of Mauritania and Senegal. Limited pasture and availability of water could result in reduced livestock production and lead to weak purchasing power for agropastoralists. Consequently, people with limited mobility of livestock could experience significant livestock losses.
- Given the vast amount of land affected by rainfall and vegetation deficits, there is a higher risk of concentration of livestock in areas with resources and of earlier transhumance for pastoralists, which will increase the risk of animal diseases as well as conflict over resources. Since October 2019, high concentrations of animals have already been registered in Guidimakha and South-East Gorgol regions of Mauritania, and the situation is likely to worsen.
- Looking into 2020, *Cadre Harmonisé* projections for the lean season are worrying as the number of people affected by severe food insecurity (Phase 3 and above) between June and August 2020 are well above the average in the Gambia (330 000 people), Mauritania (609 000 people) and Senegal (723 000 people). In Cabo Verde around 10 010 people are projected to be in Phase 3.



Recommended early actions

The following early actions are recommended for January–March in order to prevent and mitigate the impact of drought on vulnerable pastoralists and agropastoralists during the upcoming 2020 dry season, and to boost local food production.

Livestock

- Ensure close monitoring of livestock markets and promote commercial destocking of weak animals in drought-affected areas.

The outcome of the 2019 rainy season was negative in several countries along the Atlantic coast of West Africa due to poor and erratic distribution of rainfall, particularly in Cabo Verde, the Gambia, Mauritania and Senegal. The pastoral situation is severe in several areas of Mauritania and Senegal, leading to a high probability of an early and difficult pastoralist lean season.

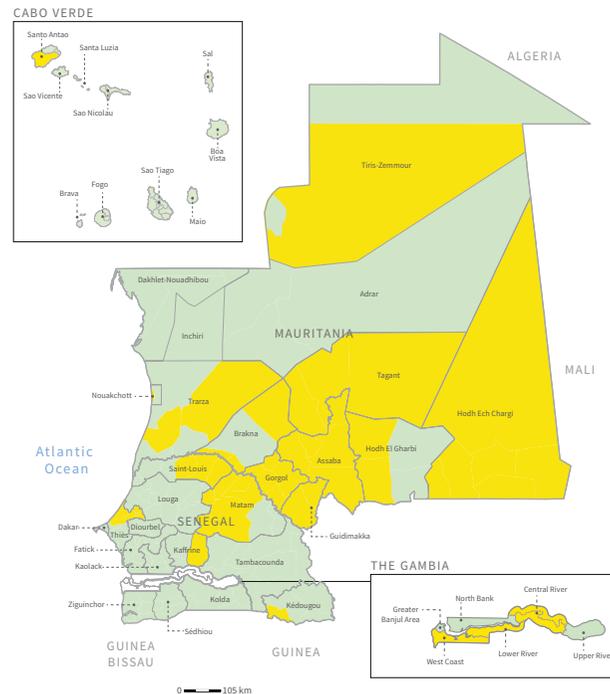
- Provide livestock feed and water to safeguard core-breeding stock.
- Boost local fodder production along river streams, pastoral wells and low-lying areas through the distribution of seeds, maralfalfa cuttings and equipment.
- Rehabilitate pastoral wells by prioritizing solar-energy-based equipment.
- Support the provision of animal health services, particularly vaccination and deworming.

Crops

- Support off-season home-gardening in communities with access to water, as well as the cultivation of irrigated and flood receding crops.
- Strengthen the utilization of groundwater resources and desalination of water for irrigated crops in Cabo Verde, in synergy with government efforts, as well as support pastoralists through access to feed and water.

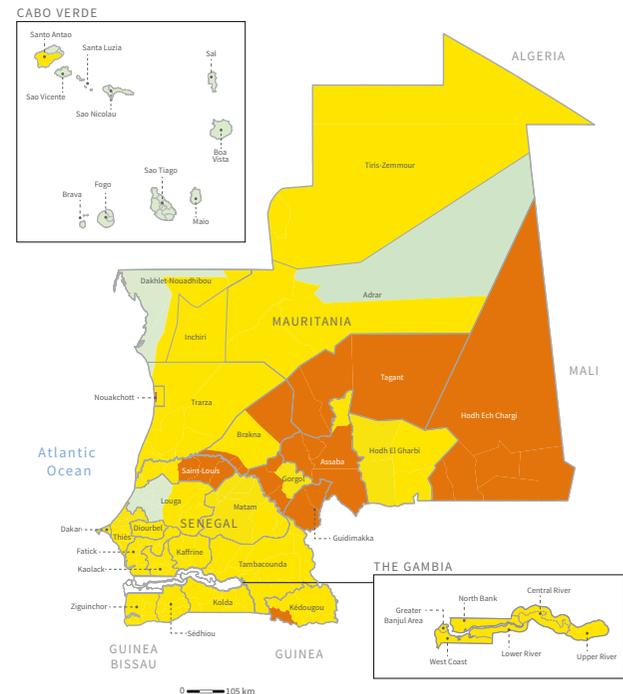
Current acute food insecurity situation

(October–December 2019)



Projected acute food insecurity situation

(June–August 2020)



CH phase classification

- 5 - Famine
- 4 - Emergency
- 3 - Crisis
- 2 - Stressed
- 1 - Minimal
- Not analysed
- Inadequate evidence

Source: *Cadre Harmonisé*, November 2019



Yemen

Elevated levels of food insecurity amid talks between warring parties



15.9 million people (53 percent of the total population) were facing severe food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 and above) in December 2018

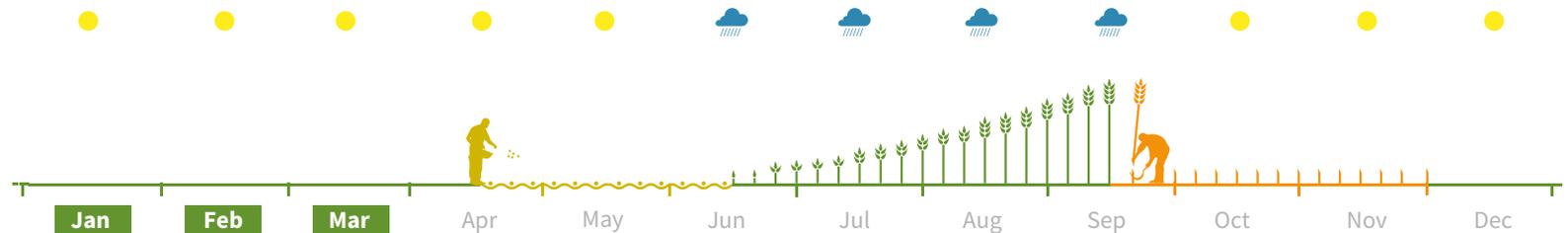


Aggregate acute malnutrition was reported in **27 percent** of children between 6 and 59 months



Risk overview

- Multiple diplomatic efforts have been taking place in Yemen since September, however conflict remains intense in several areas of the country. In September, increased fighting was observed in Al Hudaydah and Hajjah governorates. In Aden, hostilities have subsided, whereas escalated conflict in surrounding Abyan and Shabwah governorates was ongoing.
- According to the last IPC report issued in December 2018, while accounting for humanitarian food assistance levels, 15.9 million people (53 percent of the total population) were facing severe food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 and above). A follow-up hotspot analysis in June for 29 districts indicated that humanitarian food assistance is having a positive effect on households' access to food. Despite the improvements, the food security situation is still dire.
- Eleven million people relying on water supplied by piped networks and 4 million people who depend on water trucked in by private companies have had to drastically reduce their daily water consumption since fuel prices soared in September. In three major cities, Al Mahwit, Ibb and Dhamar, which are home to around 400 000 people, central water systems were shut down completely. Lack of water puts households at increasing risk of diseases such as cholera. Fuel shortages have also affected humanitarian operations in Sana'a and other areas in northern and central Yemen.
- Access issues for humanitarian actors remain critical in Yemen. At the end of December 2019, a vital grain storage facility in Al Hudaydah was hit by shelling, forcing work to temporarily close and severely affecting food aid.
- High levels of acute malnutrition persist throughout the country. In September, a surveillance system in selected locations reported aggregate acute malnutrition in 27 percent of children between 6 and 59 months. The highest rate was recorded in Al Hudaydah, with Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) at 37 percent and Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) at 15 percent, followed by Ibb and Sana'a, which both recorded MAM at 18 percent and SAM at 7 percent.
- Heavy rains between June and October have caused flash floods in most western areas of Yemen, destroying houses and contaminating water supplies. Heavy rainfall since late September is also causing flooding in southern areas of Yemen.
- The local currency (Yemen rial) remains substantially weaker than pre-crisis levels and has continued its depreciatory trajectory since April. The national average unofficial exchange rate was more than 600 YER/USD in September, a three percent increase from 586 YER/USD in August.
- The presence of plant pests has affected the agriculture sector and the country's capacity to control outbreaks is limited. Outbreaks of fall armyworm were reported on 2019 maize crops, and good rains in August 2019 have incited breeding of desert locusts.



Multiple diplomatic efforts have been taking place in Yemen since September, however conflict is intense in several areas of the country and severe food insecurity is likely to persist into 2020.

Potential impact

- Severe food insecurity is likely to persist in 2020. Should peace process efforts bring about a substantial lowering of the intensity of the conflict, this could provide some respite. That said, the process could be protracted, given the divide among warring parties.
- The main cropping season in most cereal producing areas is between April and November. Cereal production in the Tihama region (the Red Sea coastal plain) has a summer season starting in May and ending in August, a main planting season starting in late August, and a harvest in November/December. Total cereal production in 2019 is forecast at 12 percent below the previous year's harvest and more than 30 percent below the five-year average, due to conflict and outbreak of plant diseases. The impact on food security might however be limited, as Yemen imports the majority of its food requirements.

Recommended early actions

The combined effect of conflict, macroeconomic crisis, climate-related shocks and crop pests may lead to a further increase of acute malnutrition across the country. Early action is needed to support preparations for the next cereal planting season starting in April, as well as to allow the immediate fulfilment of basic needs among the most vulnerable households.

Cash

- Implement cash-based programmes, including unconditional cash and cash+, targeting the most vulnerable households in areas of acute food insecurity (IPC Phases 4 and 5).

Crops

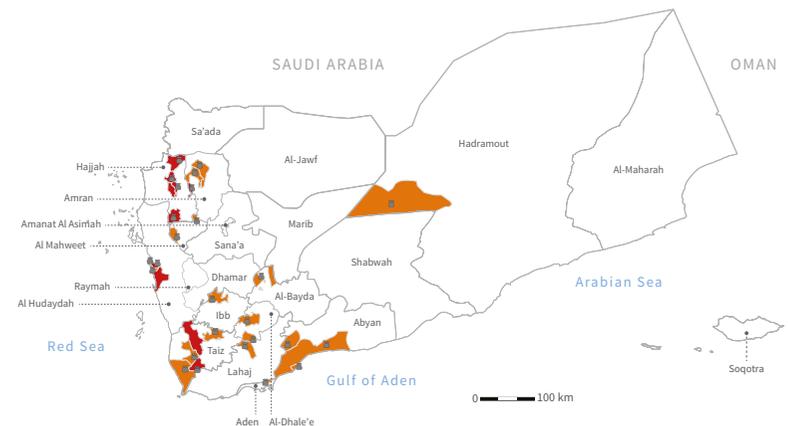
- Provide key inputs to the most food-insecure farmers by March, including crop and vegetable seeds and agricultural tools to allow timely planting in April.
- Provide solar water pumps to vulnerable farmers to overcome the high cost and scarcity of fuel.

Livestock

- Distribute animal feed and mineral supplements to vulnerable livestock raisers, especially in conflict-affected areas.

Acute food insecurity situation

(July–September 2019)



IPC phase classification

 5 - Famine	 Not analysed	 At least 25% of households meet 25–50% of caloric needs from humanitarian food assistance
 4 - Emergency	 Inadequate evidence	 At least 25% of households meet over 50% of caloric needs from humanitarian food assistance
 3 - Crisis	 Urban settlement	
 2 - Stressed		
 1 - Minimal		

Source: IPC, July 2019



Nigeria

High levels of insecurity in the North-East, increasing conflict in the North-West and localized floods affect agriculture and food security



More than **6 million** people projected to be severely food insecure (June–August 2020)



2 million internally displaced people in the North-East and over **300 000** in North-West/North-Central parts of the country



Risk overview

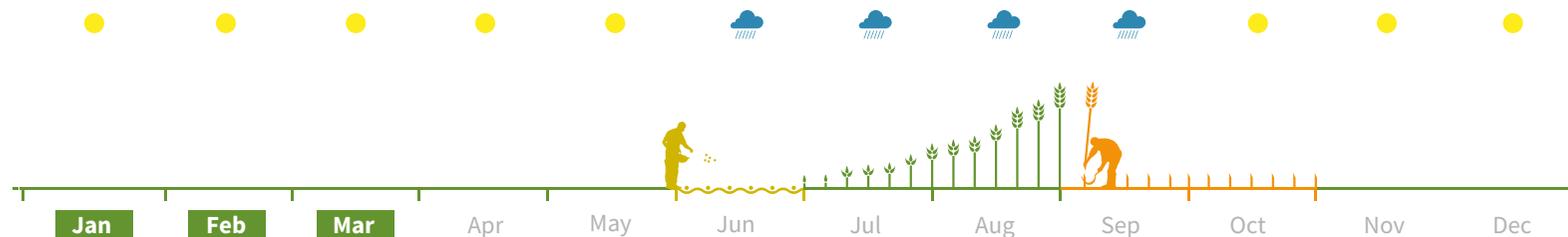
- After two years of gradually decreasing numbers of people affected by food insecurity in Nigeria, the latest *Cadre Harmonisé* analysis (November 2019) indicates that figures are now going up again. This new worrying trend requires urgent action and its underlying factors need to be monitored closely in the coming months. At national level, 4.3 million people are currently facing severe food insecurity (October–December 2019), of whom 2.9 million are located in northeastern states. This includes people in IDP camps.
- The main factors for this upward change are the high levels of conflict in northeastern states and the strong persistence of insecurity in northwestern states, notably Kaduna, Katsina, Sokoto and Zamfara, which have led to new displacements and had a localized impact on agropastoral activities in 2019. The situation was compounded by late season floods in some northwestern and northeastern states.
- In northwestern states, armed group activities and the recurrent farmer-herder conflict has increased in 2019 and spiralled into different types of violence such as banditry, cattle rustling, kidnapping, sexual violence and looting. In November 2019, a recent report of International Organization for Migration on internal displacement in eight states affected by communal violence and farmer-herder conflict (Benue, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Nasarawa, Plateau, Sokoto and Zamfara) indicates that around 540 000 people are displaced by the persistent violence. At the same time, nearly 60 000 people took refuge across the border into the Maradi region of the Niger.

- In the northeastern states, nearly 2 million people are displaced by the conflict. At the same time, late season floods have severely affected more than 200 000 people across these states, particularly in IDP camps, affecting over 4 000 people and destroying shelters, fields and livestock, particularly in Adamawa and Borno.
- Despite a generally positive agropastoral situation at national level, the situation needs to be monitored closely due to several hotspots. At national level agricultural production is forecast above the five-year average for several crops. Pasture development is either average or above-average at national level.



Potential impact

- In January–March, people in insecure areas and those affected by floods will be in need of food assistance and livelihood support, particularly those residing in displacement camps and with host communities. *Cadre Harmonisé* projections indicate that 6.1 million people will be severely food insecure during the lean season (June–August 2020), of whom 3.8 million in northeastern states. This includes people in IDP camps.
- Insecurity levels are likely to remain high particularly in the North-East with a potential increase due to the mobility of armed groups with receding waters in northeastern states, as well as persistent violence in northwestern states.



After two years of gradual improvement, increased levels of insecurity in northeast and northwest states of Nigeria are driving food insecurity figures upward and impacting agropastoral activities. This new worrying trend requires urgent action and its underlying factors need to be monitored closely in the coming months.

- As the dry season approaches, failure to provide timely feed and fodder support for nomadic pastoralist communities may lead to wasting and deterioration of food security, since livestock represents the only livelihood option for more than 85 percent of the communities.

Recommended early actions

In January–March, the following early actions are recommended:

Crops

- Support home-based livelihood activities among the most vulnerable households (micro-/backyard gardening and cash+).
- Provide women with vegetable seed kits to improve household nutrition by diversifying their diets and sources of income.
- Support women through off-season crop processing.

Livestock

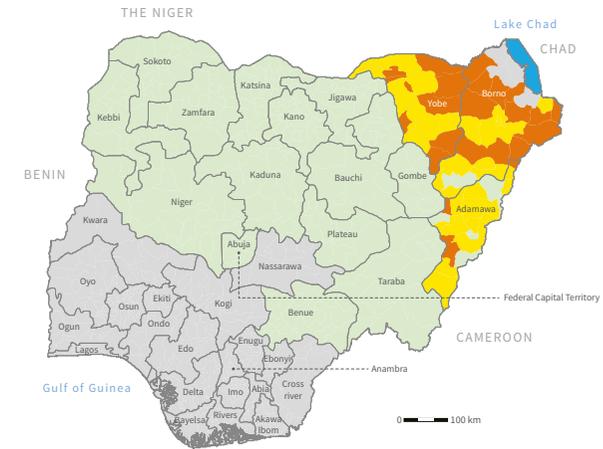
- Provide emergency feed support to vulnerable, displaced pastoralists and agropastoralists to safeguard their core-breeding animals.
- Carry out livestock restocking (mainly goats and poultry) benefiting women and youth with limited access to land along with the disbursement of cash-based transfers.
- Establish water points in nomadic IDP settlements to complement other initiatives aimed at mitigating protection risks.

Cash

- Provide conditional cash transfers to returnees and IDPs, particularly women and children.

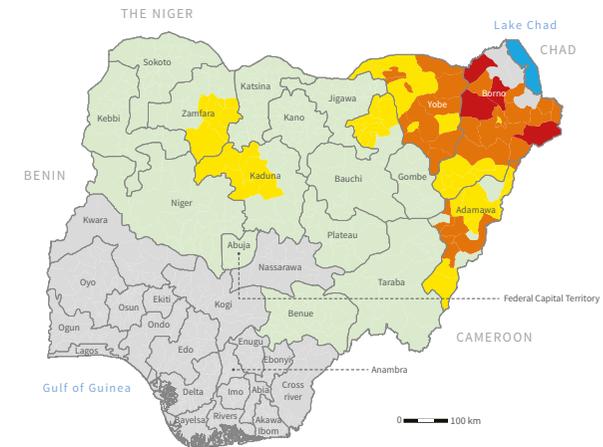
Current acute food insecurity situation

(October–December 2019)



Projected acute food insecurity situation

(June–August 2020)



CH phase classification



Source: *Cadre Harmonisé*, November 2019

high risk



Desert Locust outbreak

Dangerous situation in the Greater Horn of Africa



A swarm can contain up to **150 million** locusts per km²



A **1 km²** swarm will eat the same amount of food in one day as **35 000** people



Risk overview

- The situation remains extremely serious in the Horn of Africa, where it threatens pastures and crops in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia. Numerous swarms have formed in eastern Ethiopia and adjacent areas of northern Somalia. A number of large immature swarms moved south in the Ogaden of eastern Ethiopia and adjacent areas of central Somalia and reached southern Somalia, southeast Ethiopia and, on 28 December, northeast Kenya where they continue to arrive on a daily basis. The situation is the most serious in the past quarter century and will remain so to at least June 2020.
- A potentially threatening situation is developing along both sides of the Red Sea, where ongoing breeding is causing locust numbers to increase on the coasts of Egypt, Sudan, Eritrea, Saudi Arabia and Yemen. Widespread laying and hatching occurred in Saudi Arabia and gave rise to numerous hopper groups and bands, and a few immature swarms moved into the interior in late December. Hopper bands and swarms are also forming on the Red Sea coast in Yemen.
- In the Sudan, hopper bands are forming on the northern coast near Egypt and new swarms could form later in January. Breeding in adjacent areas of southeast Egypt is likely to cause groups to form. A second generation of breeding is in progress and will continue on the central and northern coast of Eritrea where hoppers are forming groups, which could lead to hopper bands. Control operations are underway in all affected countries.
- In southwest Asia, intensive control operations continue along both sides of the Indo-Pakistan border where numerous swarms formed. This is expected to end within a few weeks as swarms migrate to southern Iran (Islamic Republic of) and breed in areas of unusually good rainfall.



Potential impact

- There is a risk that some swarms could appear in northeast Uganda, southeast South Sudan and southwest Ethiopia.
- Ground and aerial control operations continue in Ethiopia and aerial operations started in Kenya in January. Insecurity and a lack of national capacity have hampered control operations in Somalia. During January, swarms will mature and lay eggs in the Ogaden and north central Somalia that will hatch and cause numerous hopper bands to form. Breeding is also likely to occur in Kenya.
- A typical swarm can contain up to 150 million locusts per km², and its daily consumption of crops can correspond to the daily consumption of 35 000 people. The current swarms represent an unprecedented threat to food security and livelihoods in the Horn of Africa.
- As summer breeding along both sides of the Indo-Pakistan border has ended and conditions are drying out, any remaining swarms that are not detected or treated will move west to southern Iran (Islamic Republic of) in the coming days and weeks. If temperatures remain warm in southern Iran (Islamic Republic of), egg-laying could occur in areas that received unusually heavy rains last month which will cause hopper bands to form.
- Breeding will continue on the Red Sea coast and cause a further increase in locust numbers that will give rise to hopper groups, bands, adult groups and swarms.

The information in the risk narrative is accurate as of 15 January 2020.

The Desert Locust situation remains extremely serious in the Horn of Africa where it threatens pastures and crops in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia. There is a risk that some swarms could appear in northeast Uganda, southeast South Sudan and southwest Ethiopia.



Recommended early actions

Early action is crucial to improve control and reporting of Desert Locust, and it is important that surveys are conducted in all potential areas at risk.

- Survey and control operations, including aerial control, should be immediately upscaled in eastern Ethiopia and northern and central Somalia.
- Reporting from Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, the Sudan and Yemen to FAO's Desert Locust Information Service should be escalated to two times per week.
- South Sudan and Uganda should remain alert and prepared for a potential swarm invasion.
- In affected areas of the Horn of Africa, preparation for increased food security-related needs should take place.
- Southern provinces in Iran (Islamic Republic of) should remain vigilant for the arrival of summer-bred swarms from the Indo-Pakistan border.
- Countries bordering the Red Sea should carry out regular and frequent surveys in coastal areas, supplemented by control operations for hopper bands and swarms.



African swine fever outbreak in Asia

African swine fever outbreak threatens to continue to spread across Asia



5.9 million pigs have died or been destroyed in Viet Nam, **1.19 million** in China, **150 000** in the Republic of Korea and **70 000** in the Philippines

Risk overview

- In early August 2018, African swine fever (ASF) was reported for the first time in Asia in China where, to date, there have been over 163 outbreaks. The disease was subsequently reported in Mongolia (January 2019), Viet Nam (February 2019), Cambodia (April 2019), the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (May 2019), the Lao People's Democratic Republic (June 2019), Myanmar (August 2019), the Philippines, Timor-Leste and the Republic of Korea (all September 2019). In the Republic of Korea it has occurred both in domestic pigs and wild boar. The disease has recently been reported in Indonesia (December 2019).
- As a result of these outbreaks, millions of pigs have died or been destroyed (with over 5 900 000 pigs culled in Viet Nam, 1 190 000 in China, 150 000 in the Republic of Korea, 70 000 in the Philippines, 39 000 in the Lao People's Democratic Republic and 3 115 in Mongolia).
- The ASF virus is very resistant to cold and hot temperatures, and able to survive in dry or processed pork products. Imports of pork products are difficult to control at all border points. The virus is also known to be resistant to many disinfectants and can be introduced into pig herds by various means (via transport vehicles, travellers, swill feeding, etc.) In the past few months, the ASF virus has been detected in confiscated pork products brought in to Australia, Japan, the Republic of Korea and Thailand.
- There is currently no effective treatment for ASF and the lack of a commercial vaccine makes prevention and protection difficult. As a consequence, biosecurity is the first line of defence against the disease. Increased awareness, education, hygiene and biosecurity are key to disease control.

- The ASF virus is mostly spread along the pig value chains at the country and regional levels. Risky practices for further spreading the disease include: buying piglets and adult swine from unknown sources and at lower than normal prices; mixing pigs of different origins; feeding pigs scraps from kitchens, restaurants, rubbish or from abattoirs; allowing visitors onto swine farms; and sharing contaminated equipment, transport vehicles or footwear.



Potential impact

- The widespread occurrence of the disease in Asia – such as in the most recent cases in the Philippines and Timor-Leste – shows that the disease can spread easily across borders. Countries in the region including, but not limited to, Thailand and Malaysia continue to be considered at high risk of introduction of the disease.
- The virus can have devastating socio-economic consequences, which could lead to food insecurity. Some farmers may lose entire herds of pigs and compensation is not always available. This can lead to a reluctance in reporting of ASF clinical signs to veterinary services. A country's trade may be impacted, which in turn can generate imbalances between supply and demand, and destabilize prices of pork and pork products.
- As ASF continues to spread in the region, it is likely to have serious impacts on already fragile rural livelihoods and food security as the swine sector plays a key role as a source of animal protein in the region. Pigs are a crucial food source due to their fast growth, efficient feed conversion, quick turnover and high reproduction. Moreover, as consumers substitute pork for other animal proteins such as chicken, spillovers can materialize and increase the price of animal protein overall.

The information in the risk narrative is accurate as of 18 December 2019.

As African swine fever continues to spread in the region, it is likely to have serious impacts on already fragile rural livelihoods and food security as the swine sector plays a key role as a source of animal protein in the region. The virus can have devastating socio-economic consequences, which could lead to food insecurity. Some farmers may lose entire herds of pigs and compensation is not always available.



Recommended early actions

Long term

Preparedness and prevention

- Carry out preparedness activities for non-affected countries including contingency planning, standard operating procedures for preparedness and control activities, and secured financial support, and build capacities based on the principles of early warning, field detection and laboratory diagnosis, notification, early reaction and coordination.
- Enable legislation in line with the Good Emergency Management Practices manual guidelines to authorize veterinary regulatory controls for ASF.
- Understand the pig value chains including other ASF risk relevant information at the country and regional levels, and step up biosecurity practices along the pig value chains.
- Develop outbreak management options based on local context with respect to stopping the virus spread, reducing the viral load in the environment, minimizing the economic losses and maintaining food security.
- Strengthen surveillance and monitoring of the transport of live pigs as well as pork products.
- Ensure that sustainable outbreak control strategies are developed.
- Carry out assessments of the socio-economic impact of the disease on pig production and farmers' livelihoods.
- Conduct a cost-benefit analysis of the investment in ASF prevention and emergency preparedness.
- Raise awareness among the general public on risks of disease spread and how they can contribute to preventing the spread of the disease. The main risk of spread lies in human actions (how pigs are raised and transported, how waste is handled, how disease can spread through swill, etc.)

Short term

Advocacy, awareness and communication

- During major holidays (Christmas, New Year, Chinese Lunar New Year, etc.), when there is increased movement of people and food consumption, targeted risk communication activities and heightened vigilance are needed to reduce the risk of ASF introduction and spread through the transport of pork products by travellers.
- Implement a comprehensive risk communication and advocacy strategic plan to call for necessary actions to be undertaken by relevant stakeholders including veterinarians and auxiliary personnel, farmers, abattoir workers, intermediaries and other actors in the value chain, and communicate with them to create a sense of urgency around the issue and inform them about how to take the next steps.
- Strengthen awareness raising and training activities targeting all relevant stakeholders including farmers, distributors, abattoir workers, and other actors in the value chain, private and government veterinarians and auxiliary personnel.

Other complementary measures

- Strengthen proper disposal of food waste (e.g. at food service locations, airports and seaports), which may contain uncooked pork products to minimize the likelihood of ASF virus contamination in the environment and entry into the pig production system.



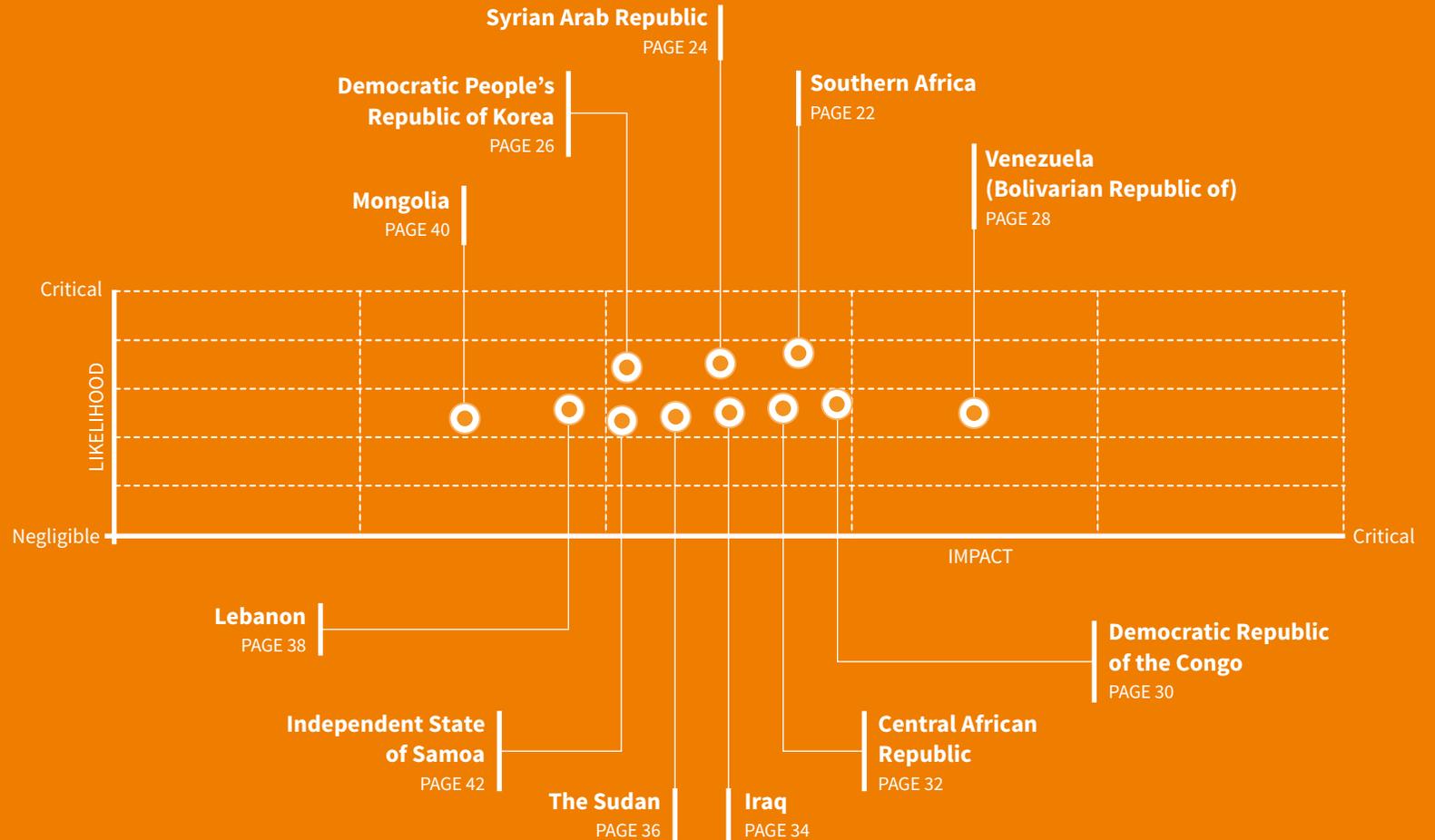
Food insecurity remains a major concern in the complex humanitarian context of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The security situation is precarious, especially in conflict zones in the eastern provinces of the country i.e. Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu. Insecurity is also affecting Ebola response teams in Beni and Butembo. Early action is required to support the ongoing sowing season, as well as off-season production and alternative income sources.

On watch

The matrix provides an overview of the ranking of risks featured in this report. The risks are prioritized based on the severity, likelihood and magnitude of their impact, while also balanced against the countries' individual coping capacity.

In order of intensity, for the period January–March 2020, the **on watch** section includes:

- Southern Africa
- Syrian Arab Republic
- Democratic People's Republic of Korea
- Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
- Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Central African Republic
- Iraq
- The Sudan
- Lebanon
- Mongolia
- Independent State of Samoa





Southern Africa

Forecast below-average seasonal rainfall likely to compound existing vulnerabilities



12.5 million people in the region will be severely food insecure through to March 2020



Regional cereal output is forecast to be **7 percent** below the five-year average



Risk overview

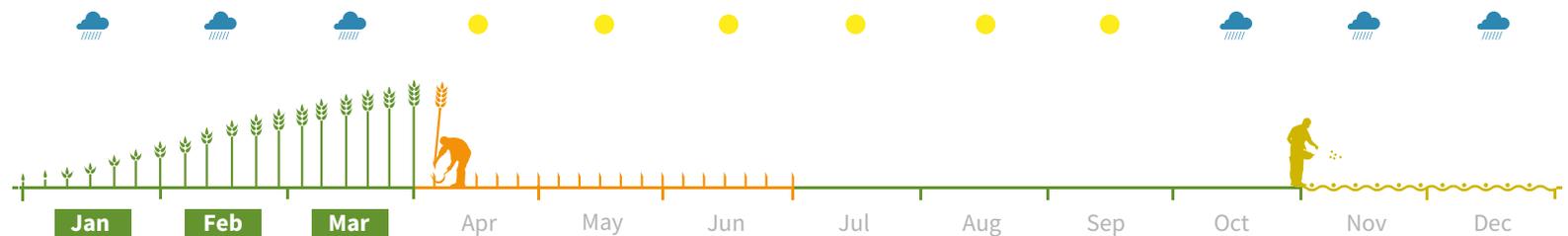
- The rainy season across Southern Africa in 2018/19 was one of the driest on record for nearly 40 years, particularly in southern Angola, north-western Botswana, western Madagascar, Namibia, southern Zambia and north-western Zimbabwe.
- The severe drought has resulted in below-average regional cereal output and increasing food insecurity across many countries, while ongoing low rainfall so far this season has considerably slowed vegetation regeneration, including pasture, across many countries.
- Livestock conditions are poor across southern and central areas of the region and there are reports of unusually high numbers of drought-related livestock deaths, in particular in southern Angola, northern Namibia, and southern Zimbabwe.
- The number of food-insecure people in Southern Africa is projected to peak at 12.5 million through March 2020, an increase of 15 percent compared with the same time last year and the second-highest number on record after the 2015/16 El Niño weather phenomenon in the subregion.
- The significant deterioration in food security conditions is mainly due to reduced harvests that have cut household food stocks. A lack of casual labour opportunities and increasing food prices have further affected rural households' purchasing power to access food from markets.

- The largest increases in food insecurity were registered in Zambia and Zimbabwe, where the number of people in need of assistance is projected to more than double on a yearly basis. According to the IPC and the Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee, between January and March 2020, 2.3 million people are projected to be food insecure in Zambia and 5.5 million people in Zimbabwe. In Lesotho, the majority of households are facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes.



Potential impact

- Given the ongoing depletion of food stocks and above-average prices, notable improvements in food security conditions are not expected before March 2020. Furthermore, below-average rainfall was recorded from the start of the rainy season up to December 2019. Most international forecasts predict this will continue until March 2020 across most of Southern Africa, with the exception of north-eastern parts of the region where above-average rainfall is expected.
- Dry conditions during the second half of the rainy season (January–March) are likely to lead to a further decrease in crop yields and the drying up of community watering points,



Improvements in food security are not expected before March 2020 due to the ongoing depletion of food stocks, above-average prices and forecast below-average seasonal rainfall (October–March) across many countries.

which could affect crop and livestock production for another consecutive season. Agriculture-related income for poor households is likely to be affected throughout the cropping season, which will affect purchasing power and access to food from markets.



Recommended early actions

Between January and March, early action to support off-season crop production and livestock health could mitigate the impact of a forecast second consecutive poor rainy season, and prevent further deterioration of food insecurity across Southern Africa. Priority countries include Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Crops

- Install hand and solar water pumps combined with seed distributions (vegetable and other crops) and training on water management, to support off-season production in vulnerable areas potentially affected by rainfall deficits.
- Provide superior storage equipment (such as hermetic bags) and train vulnerable smallholder farmers on post-harvest loss management in order to prevent further losses.

Livestock

- Rehabilitate water points in the most vulnerable communities potentially affected by rainfall deficits.
- Distribute animal feed and mineral supplements to vulnerable pastoralists and livestock keepers to protect core breeding stock,

especially in Namibia and western Zimbabwe.

- Provide emergency treatment and vaccinations as soon as possible before further depletion of watering points and consequent increases in risk of transboundary animal diseases due to migration.
- Distribute poultry and small ruminants among the most food-insecure households.

Syrian Arab Republic

Food security gains at risk due to conflict in the northeast and a new wave of displacement in the northwest



About **6.5 million** people are food insecure and in need of food and livelihood support



6.1 million people are internally displaced



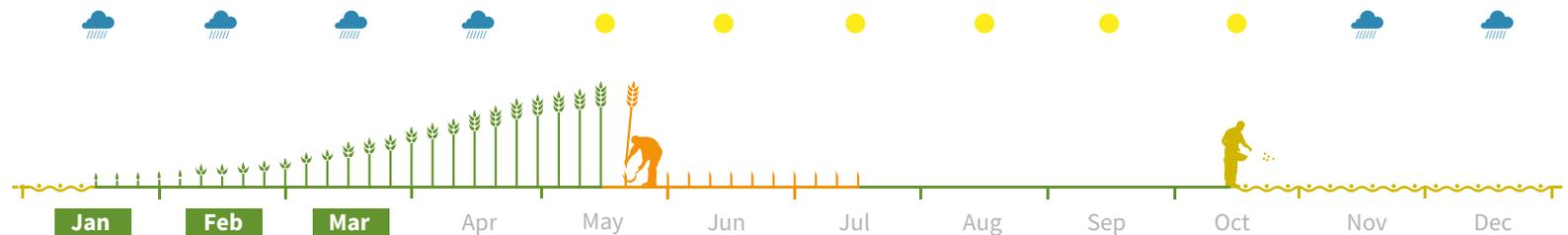
More than **5.7 million** Syrian refugees registered in the region



Risk overview

- The humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic remains severe, particularly in areas still affected by conflict, despite improvements in 2019. A total of 6.1 million people are internally displaced, with over 1.25 million people being displaced between January and September 2019 alone. As of November 2019, more than 5.7 million Syrian refugees were registered in the region, a number that has not changed significantly since the middle of 2018, according to the UNHCR.
- The overall situation has improved as compared to last year in almost all of the assessed areas. The most vulnerable governorates remain those where military operations are still ongoing, including Aleppo, Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor, and currently, Al-Hasakeh.
- More consistent improvements in the food security situation have been limited by persistent insecurity and displacement in northwestern and northeastern Syrian Arab Republic. High food prices, currency depreciation, sanctions and agriculture-related shocks have also constrained improvements.
- Large-scale military operations took place in October in Al-Hasakeh and Ar-Raqqa governorates following a military incursion. Although a ceasefire was signed at the end of October, it is uncertain whether it will hold over the coming months. According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, fighting continued in November, resulting in significant population displacements.

- Areas affected by the hostilities in October are some of the major wheat producing regions in the northeast of the country. The areas affected in Al-Hasakeh Governorate are the Tal Tamer sub-district and the Ras al Ain district, where wheat production represents approximately 11 percent of the total wheat production in the Governorate. The area affected in Ar-Raqqa Governorate is the Tel Abiad district, where wheat production represents about 50 percent of the total production in Ar-Raqqa. According to a Food Security Sector estimation conducted after the October 2019 hostilities, an estimated 1.17 million people are food insecure or at risk of food insecurity in northeastern Syrian Arab Republic.
- The main wheat planting season typically begins in October, with harvests between May and July. According to GIEWS, abundant and well-distributed rainfall coupled with improved security conditions resulted in a significant expansion of the area sown with cereals. The 2019 wheat production is estimated at 2.2 million tonnes, up from 1.2 million tonnes in 2018, but still below the pre-crisis level of 4.1 million tonnes (2002–2011). The implication of this is a national deficit of 1.7 million tonnes going into 2020.
- Farming families often host internally displaced people, which has added a significant burden on the livelihoods of host communities that are already affected by natural disasters, fires and high prices of food, fuel and agricultural production inputs. These stresses have led to a total estimated production loss of about 274 000 tonnes of wheat, which corresponds to food needs of about 1.4 million people over one year.



Large-scale military operations took place in October in northeastern Syrian Arab Republic following a military incursion. With the military situation in northeastern Syrian Arab Republic remaining fluid, it is likely that significant population movements will continue over the coming months. As a result, food security could deteriorate in affected areas, despite the positive 2019 harvest. In addition, the latest wave of displacement in the northwest is further exacerbating the vulnerability of people in need.

- According to OCHA, aerial bombardment intensified in southern Idlib in northwestern Syrian Arab Republic since the middle of December. Bombardments affected large population centres such as Saraqab and Ma'arrat An-Nu'man as well as towns and villages in the countryside of Ma'arrat An-Nu'man, which further accelerated displacement. Moreover, ground fighting also resumed along the frontlines in southern Idlib Governorate. Through December, almost 300 000 people fled from the southern Idlib Governorate. Ma'arrat An Nu'man and its countryside are reportedly depopulated, while thousands from Saraqab and its eastern countryside fled in anticipation of hostilities extending to the area.



Potential impact

- With the military situation in northeastern Syrian Arab Republic remaining fluid, it is likely that significant population movements will continue over the coming months. This could affect areas which are already characterized by some of the highest levels of food insecurity in the country, such as Ar-Raqqa, which was the Governorate with the highest proportion of households with poor food consumption according to the June 2019 FAO/WFP CFSAM. As a result, food security could deteriorate further over the coming months in affected areas, despite the positive 2019 harvest.
- The latest wave of displacement in Idlib is further exacerbating the vulnerability of people in need. Humanitarian support is urgent, particularly shelter, food, health, non-food and winterization assistance.



Recommended early actions

Rapid and targeted actions are crucial to prevent further food security deterioration throughout the winter period in conflict-affected areas of the Syrian Arab Republic. Action should focus on supporting the most food-insecure households, including displaced people as well as hosting farmer families in the northeast and along the border with Turkey.

Crops

- Distribute vegetable production kits by March in crisis-affected IDP-hosting communities of Qamishley – Al-Hasakeh (in Al-Hasakeh Governorate) and Al-Thawara and As-Sabkha (in Ar-Raqqa Governorate).

Livestock

- Distribute animal feed and mineral supplements to vulnerable livestock producers in conflict-affected areas.
- Distribute sheep to vulnerable crisis-affected farmers who lost their herds as a result of the crisis.

Cash

- Conduct cash-based programmes in targeted areas to support the livelihoods of the most vulnerable crisis-affected households.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

The combination of severe dry and wet conditions may have impacted the main 2019 harvest season and could compromise food security over the coming winter months



10.1 million people are food insecure and urgently require food assistance



458 km² of farmland was estimated to be destroyed due to Typhoon Lingling



Risk overview

- The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is experiencing crop production shortfalls due to recurrent adverse weather conditions, in the form of prolonged dry spells, typhoons and floods. In addition, macroeconomic challenges and sanctions, including restrictions of fuel, machinery and spare parts for agricultural equipment are also negatively compounding the situation. Given the country's dependence on local food production, any decrease in the output can lead to serious food insecurity levels.
- According to the FAO/WFP Rapid Food Security Assessment Mission Report released in May 2019, an estimated 10.1 million people (40 percent of the population) are food insecure and urgently require food assistance.
- The 2019 main season crops (consisting primarily of rice and maize) were harvested over the September–October period, but they are estimated to be below the average. This is particularly concerning as overall food production in 2018 was more than 9 percent lower compared with 2017, and was the lowest production level in more than a decade. This would also mark the third consecutive year of a reduced output.
- Further compounding the situation in August/September 2019 was heavy rainfall combined with the landfall of Typhoon Lingling in September 2019. The typhoons induced localized

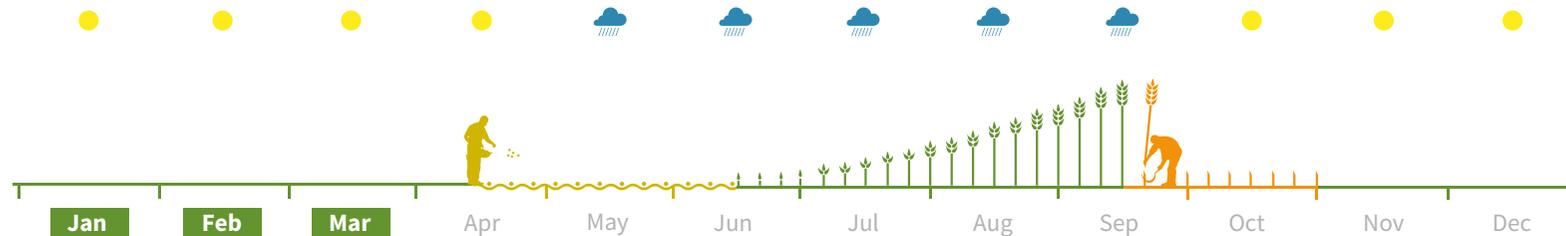
damage to maturing standing crops and an estimated 458 km² of farmland was either partly destroyed or damaged in the southwest areas of the country.

- According to the remote-sensing based Global Crop Monitoring System, the main season harvest could be below average in the main cereal producing areas, which are located in South/North Hwanghae and South Pyongan, stating the irregular rainfall and low reservoir levels during the summer as the main cause of the reduced production.
- According to the Food Chain Crisis and Emergency Prevention System, in May 2019, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea confirmed the presence of the highly contagious African swine fever, which was first detected in Chagang-Do province. Since then, no other ASF events have been reported in the country.



Potential impact

- If, once data is reported from national sources, it is the case that crop production is below average for a third consecutive year, food shortages are likely over the coming winter months. The main harvest is critical for food security and supply throughout the country. As dry and wet conditions may have hampered the outcome of this yield, it is likely that the food security situation could deteriorate even further and sharply increase



Adverse weather conditions coupled with macroeconomic challenges and sanctions have continued to impact local agricultural output, especially affecting vulnerable population relying on domestic production and public distribution systems. As a result of this situation, food insecurity and humanitarian needs are likely to increase in the coming months.

humanitarian needs. This can have a serious impact on an already vulnerable population, which relies heavily on domestic production and the public distribution system.



Recommended early actions

Early action is needed over the winter months to mitigate the effects of prolonged dry and wet conditions on food security. Livelihood diversification and off-season production should be urgently supported throughout the reporting period, especially in South/North Hwanghae and South Pyongan.

Crops

- Distribute vegetable seeds, such as potatoes, which can grow in the winter months, tools and ready-to-install greenhouses to support off-season production among households in the southern rice bowl areas.

Livestock

- Strengthen surveillance of ASF, particularly on the border with China and the Republic of Korea. Please refer to the ASF risk page for a list of detailed actions.

Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

Macroeconomic crisis to result in continued deterioration of food security in 2020

 **4.6 million** refugees and migrants fled Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) (November 2019)

 More than **21 percent** of the population was undernourished in 2016–2018 compared with **12 percent** in 2014

Risk overview

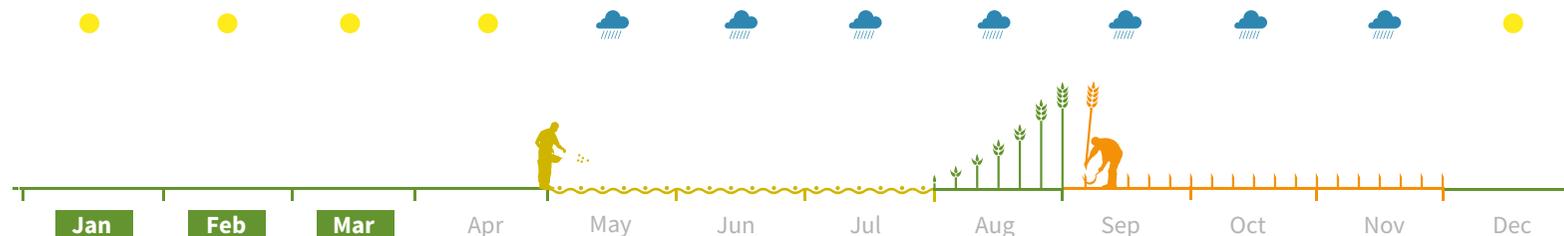
- The economic crisis in Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) continues. Purchasing power has been severely eroded due to multiple economic factors such as hyperinflation, a protracted Gross domestic product (GDP) contraction and economic sanctions, which have severely hampered households' access to food.
- According to the Central Bank of Venezuela, inflation reached over 130 000 percent in 2018, the highest in the country's history. Among the items most affected by inflation were food and non-alcoholic beverages, with an increase in prices estimated at over 143 000 percent. Oil production, once a mainstay of the economy, has declined from an average of 2.36 million barrels per day in 2015 to approximately 687 000 in October 2019.
- According to FAO's State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (July 2019), Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) has seen an increase in the rate of undernourishment from 11.7 percent (3.7 million people) in 2012–2014 to 21.2 percent (6.8 million people) in 2016–2018.
- A Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for July–December 2019 was launched, which builds on the scale-up strategy initiated in October 2018. FAO and partners under the livelihoods and food security sector are aiming to assist about 300 000 people under the Plan, which focuses on: (i) ensuring the survival and well-being of the most vulnerable people by improving their access to essential goods and services; (ii) strengthening institutional and

community mechanisms to protect the most vulnerable groups; and (iii) strengthening the resilience of the most vulnerable and contributing to the sustainability of essential services.

- Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) imports most of its food; however, food imports have declined significantly since 2014. In the first half of 2019, imports of maize and wheat grain – the most imported cereal – were well below the previous five-year average. As a result, domestic food production has become increasingly important to sustain needs. Harvesting for the main maize cropping season typically takes place between September and November. Cereal production is expected at well below-average levels due to a significant contraction in land area sown as increasing production costs, lack of agricultural inputs and the introduction of a price ceiling discouraged farmers from planting.

Potential impact

- Insufficient domestic food production in 2019 is aggravated by difficulties in importing food and inputs for food production due to the severely depreciated local currency, and the impact of economic sanctions. The capacity of the country to fulfil the cereal import requirements for the 2019/20 marketing year (July–June) are expected to be low. This situation is likely to generate a continuous deterioration of food security in Venezuela during 2020.



Insufficient domestic food production in 2019 was aggravated by difficulties in importing food and inputs. This is likely to generate a continuous deterioration of food security in Venezuela throughout 2020, and current migratory trends are likely to continue.

- According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (November 2019), of the 4.6 million refugees and migrants from Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), nearly 80 percent fled to countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Current migratory trends are likely to continue in 2020.



Recommended early actions

Early action between January and March should aim to support food production among small-scale farmers within the country to offset food deficits and prevent further deterioration of food security. This period is crucial for preparations ahead of the main cropping season, whose outcome will contribute to determine the food security situation of about 80 percent of the people in Lara, Trujillo, Portuguesa and Merida states.

Crops

- Distribute high-yielding, early-maturing rice and maize seeds, as well as vegetable seeds ahead of the main planting season, targeting the most vulnerable farming households in the states of Lara, Trujillo, Portuguesa and Merida.
- Set up school farms in urban, peri-urban and rural areas of Lara state, focusing on the production of short-cycle vegetables and cereals, and home gardening.

Cash

- Implement cash-based transfer activities to support seed production and local seed markets ahead of the planting season, especially in Lara state.

Cross-cutting

- Continue to support Venezuelan migrants and host communities within the country as well as in bordering rural areas of neighbouring countries by boosting local food production and increasing income opportunities.



Democratic Republic of the Congo

New waves of violence are exacerbating the already fragile humanitarian situation



3 390 confirmed and probable Ebola virus disease (EVD) cases and **2 233** deaths



15.6 million people severely food insecure up to June 2020



Risk overview

- Food insecurity remains a major concern in the complex humanitarian context of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. According to the latest IPC analysis (August 2019), 15.6 million people are severely food insecure (July–December 2019) and in need of urgent humanitarian assistance.
- Insecurity in the country remains precarious, especially in conflict-affected areas in the eastern provinces of Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu. Violence in these areas is causing continuous population displacement, with an estimated 4 million IDPs.
- On 30 October 2019, the Government launched military operations in Beni territory, North Kivu, with the objective of neutralizing the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF). As a response to the offensive, ADF's attacks escalated in many areas, with recent violence in Oicha and Beni. The confrontation also displaced around 81 000 persons, bringing the total of internally displaced people in Ituri and North Kivu provinces to 2.6 million. The local population in Beni and Butembo demonstrated against

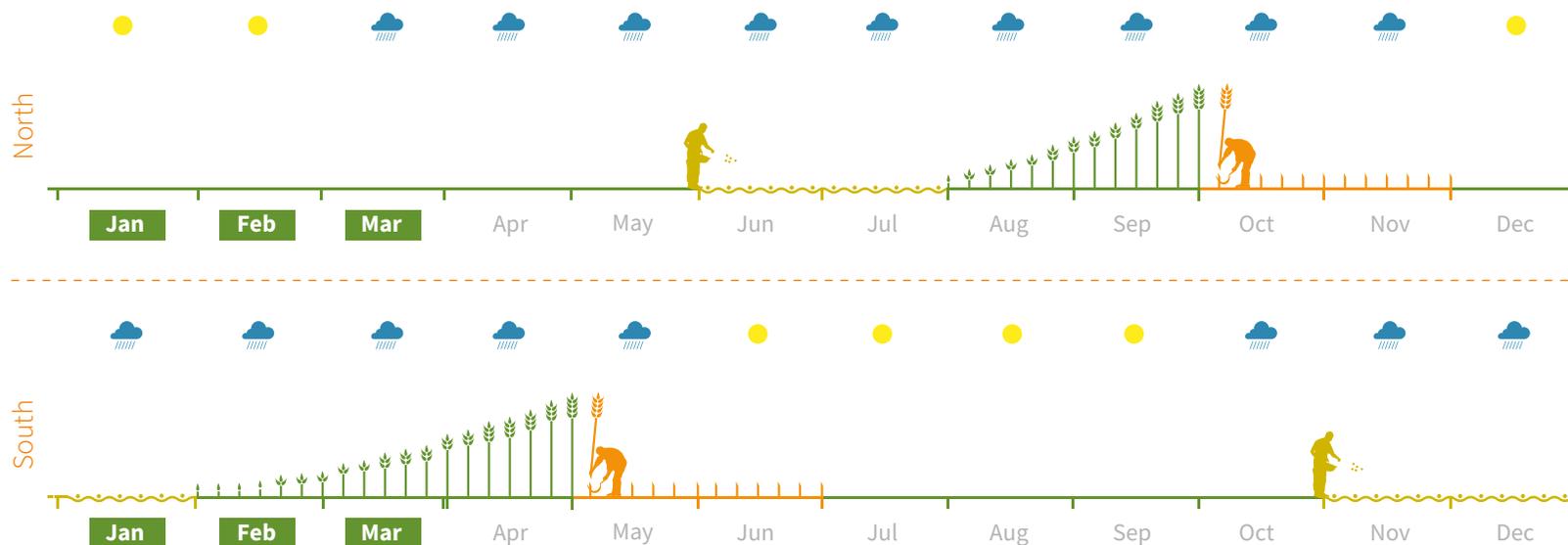
the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Government troops to show their discontent with the ongoing instability in the area. Moreover, widespread insecurity in both localities is affecting EVD response teams, where around 80 health workers have been relocated to Goma and Bunia, while others are on lockdown and unable to proceed with the implementation of activities.

- Since the EVD outbreak, over 3 390 confirmed and probable cases and 2 233 deaths have been reported, as of December 2019. During the past two months, numbers of new EVD cases have significantly decreased; however, the interruption and downturn of activities might negatively affect the current trend.



Potential impact

- Severe food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 and above) during the peak of the lean season (January–March) is likely in eastern parts of the country, including Tanganyika, North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri provinces. Insecurity has led to consecutive seasons of



Food security in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has considerably deteriorated, with 15.6 million people severely food insecure (IPC Phases 3 and 4) during July–December 2019, up from 13.1 million in August 2018. Moreover, recent insecurity incidents are affecting humanitarian response to Ebola virus disease.

reduced harvests, resulting in the depletion of households' food stocks. From March onwards, harvest of secondary season maize crops may improve populations' fragile situation.

- The recent outbreak of violence in the eastern provinces of the country will affect both households' access to their fields and income sources and humanitarian workers' delivery and assistance to vulnerable groups. As a result, populations' food security is likely to deteriorate.

Recommended early actions

Early action is required to prevent a further deterioration of the food security situation in eastern areas of the country affected by the outbreak of violence. Interventions should support the ongoing sowing season, where feasible, but also off-season production and alternative income sources.

Crops

- Distribute seeds (bean, cowpea and sweet potato) to the most vulnerable IDPs, returnees and host communities in Ituri, North Kivu (Beni, Bunia), South Kivu and Kasai, by the start of the rainy season (February–March).
- Distribute vegetable seeds, tools and processing equipment to IDPs, returnees, host communities and EVD-affected villages in Ituri, North Kivu (Beni, Bunia), South Kivu and Kasai during the preparation of nurseries in January.

Fisheries and aquaculture

- Provide fishing kits and training to the most vulnerable fishers in the areas along the Lake Kivu, especially targeting displaced people and host communities.
- Distribute fish conservation equipment to reduce post-harvest losses among the most vulnerable fishers in the areas along Lake Kivu, especially targeting displaced people and host communities.

Livestock

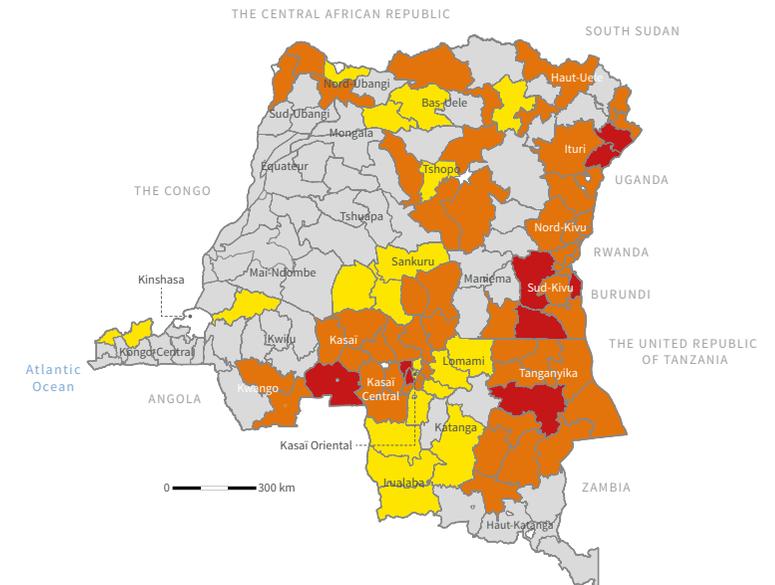
- Distribute small ruminants or pigs to improve the livelihoods of conflict-affected and food-insecure people in South Kivu and Ituri provinces.

Cash

- Implement cash-based transfers and voucher schemes to improve vulnerable households' access to agricultural inputs, food items and basic needs in EVD-affected villages.

Acute food insecurity situation

(January–May 2020)



IPC phase classification



Source: IPC, August 2019

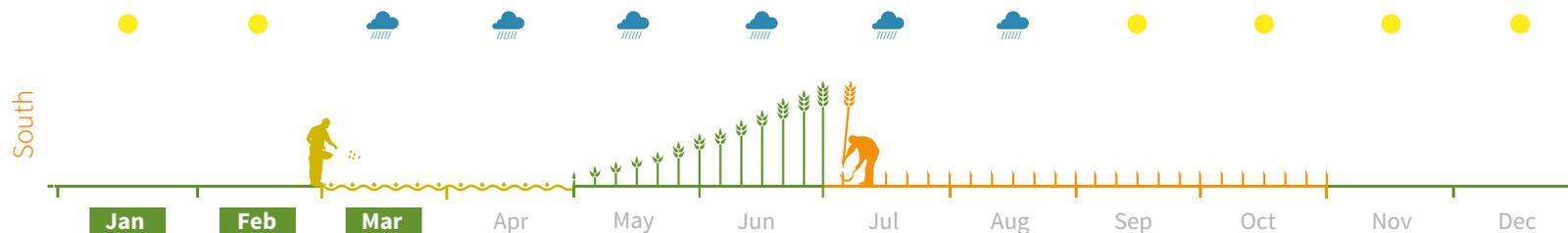
Central African Republic

Recent floods and increased insecurity are likely to further deteriorate food security conditions

 **1.6 million** people severely food insecure

Risk overview

- Despite the signing of the peace agreement (Khartoum, February 2019), the security situation remains precarious throughout the Central African Republic, mainly in the Basse-Kotto, Haute-Kotto, Nana-Gribizi and Vakaga prefectures where non-signatory armed groups continue their incursions around major cities and supply routes.
- Several regions of the country have been affected by widespread flooding, which have destroyed over 10 000 houses and affected more than 100 000 people according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Severe damage to buildings and key infrastructure is affecting an already vulnerable population, while risks of an outbreak of water-borne diseases are likely.
- While the outcome of the 2019 agricultural campaign is expected to be above average compared with the previous five years, thanks to the overall favourable weather conditions and improved security especially in central and western areas, it is still expected to be lower than pre-crisis levels. Persisting violence by non-signatory armed groups, particularly in eastern areas, and long-term effects of the protracted crisis continue to hinder agricultural activities.
- In addition, heavy rains in October 2019 have disrupted drying and stocking of newly harvested cereal crops. This led to reduced availability of cereals for household consumption and market sales, and in turn to high food prices, with a 50 to 60-percent increase for cassava and maize (Bangui, Bambari, Bangassou and Bria) compared with the previous year.
- Between September and October 2019, nearly 1.35 million people (almost 30 percent of the population analysed) were facing severe food insecurity, with nearly 274 000 people in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) during the harvest period. Three areas with a high concentration of displaced persons (Kaga-Bandoro, Obo and Zémio) and three prefectures (Mbomou, Haute-Kotto and Haut-Mbomou) are projected to be in IPC Phase 4. As of October 2019, there are over 581 000 IDPs and about 600 000 Central African refugees in neighbouring countries.
- Violations to the peace agreement are restricting humanitarian assistance in the eastern and southeastern parts of the country, and continue to trigger population displacements, to prevent returns and to exacerbate humanitarian needs. Limited access is aggravated by the deterioration of road conditions and hard-to-reach areas, especially those affected by the recent floods. Moreover, between July and September, an average of 30 attacks a month targeting humanitarian workers were reported, mainly in Bambari, Batangafo and Kaga-Bandoro.



Despite the signing of the peace agreement (Khartoum, February 2019), the security situation remains precarious throughout the country, mainly in the Basse-Kotto, Haute-Kotto, Nana-Gribizi and Vakaga prefectures where non-signatory armed groups continue their incursions around major cities and supply routes.

Potential impact

- During the post-harvest period (September 2019–April 2020), the sub-prefectures of Obo, Zémio, Bria, Ndjoukou, Ippy, Kouango, Batangafo and Kabo are estimated to be in Emergency (IPC Phase 4), while 47 sub-prefectures are estimated to be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3), despite planned food assistance. About 1.6 million people, representing 35 percent of the population analysed (4.6 million), are severely food insecure, including 375 000 (nearly 10 percent) in Emergency.
- Household food stocks are likely to be depleted in early February, which could lead to increased reliance on markets and foraging. As a result, the quality and amount of available food for consumption are likely to deteriorate from February onwards.
- Eastern and southeastern prefectures, including Basse-Kotto, Haute-Kotto, Haut-Mbomou and Mbomou, are likely to remain affected by severe food insecurity due to recent floods resulting in decreased agricultural production, ongoing insecurity, high food prices and displacement. Insecurity is likely to continue to affect other prefectures including Kémo, Nana-Gribizi, Ouaka and Ouham, where IPC Phase 4 conditions persist. Without sustained food and livelihood assistance, IDPs and vulnerable host communities will continue to suffer from food deficits and will be dependent on humanitarian assistance.

Recommended early actions

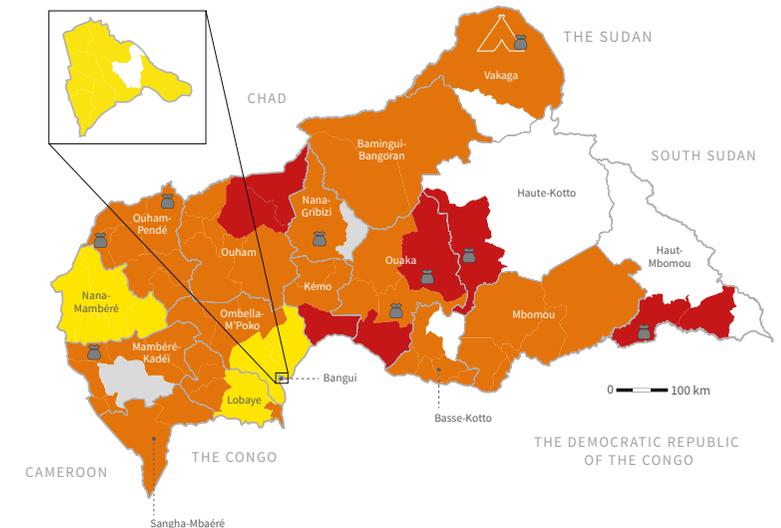
The potential severe impact of floods on stored crops may further threaten the already fragile food security situation in the most vulnerable and conflict-affected areas. Early action between January and March can play a critical role in supporting the planting season starting in March, as well as mitigating the effects of the lean season on food insecurity.

Crops

- Provide emergency agricultural kits by the start of the planting season in March, including seeds (maize, paddy and sorghum) and tools, to increase the agricultural production of IDPs and host communities in Basse-Kotto, Haute-Kotto, Haut-Mbomou, Mbomou, Nana-Gribizi, Ouaka, Ouham and Ouham-Pendé.

Acute food insecurity situation

(September 2019–April 2020)



IPC phase classification

 5 - Famine	 Not analysed (inaccessible)	 At least 25% of households meet 25–50% of caloric needs from humanitarian food assistance
 4 - Emergency	 Inadequate evidence	 At least 25% of households meet over 50% of caloric needs from humanitarian food assistance
 3 - Crisis	 IDPs/other settlements classification	
 2 - Stressed		
 1 - Minimal		

Source: IPC, November 2019



Iraq

Unrest could lead to worsening food security



6.7 million people in need of humanitarian assistance



1.8 million IDPs



Risk overview

- Large-scale political unrest, mainly taking place in urban centres, has flared up since the beginning of October. As of the end of December, at least 450 people had been killed. A significant increase in involvement of external actors in the country, exemplified by recent airstrikes on Iraqi soil, could severely aggravate political instability with potential repercussions on food security.
- According to the 2019 Humanitarian Needs Overview, the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance has decreased from 8.7 million in 2018 to 6.7 million people, including an estimated 1.8 million IDPs, out of a total population of 36 million. Approximately 1.77 million people, mostly IDPs and returnees, are in need of food security and livelihood assistance.
- Iraq is dependent on importing a significant portion of its food, with demand continuing to grow due to population growth. Imported cereals are distributed to vulnerable households through the Government’s social safety net programme – the Public Distribution System, which does not, however, sufficiently meet the country’s food needs.
- Large fiscal and current account surpluses – around 8 and 7 percent of GDP, respectively – were recorded in 2018, allowing the Government to retire domestic debt and accumulate fiscal buffers. Nevertheless, the country’s fiscal and external position

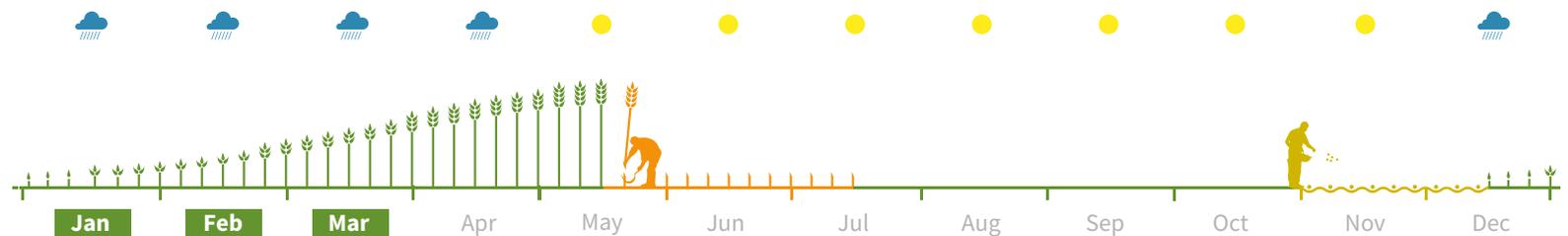
are both expected to have weakened in 2019 according to the World Bank.

- In terms of internal production, the main wheat harvest in Iraq typically takes place between May and July. According to GIEWS, cereal production in 2019 is estimated at 5.6 million tonnes, more than 80 percent above the 2018 harvest and 30 percent above the five-year average. This increase is almost entirely due to a surge in wheat production from the drought-affected output of 2.2 million tonnes in 2018 to 4.3 million tonnes in 2019.
- Large-scale military operations took place in October in the Al-Hasakeh and Ar-Raqqa governorates in northeastern Syrian Arab Republic following a military incursion. Although a ceasefire was signed at the end of October, it is uncertain whether it will hold over the coming months. Conflict in the region is causing an increase in the number of displaced people entering Iraq.



Potential impact

- There is a risk that political turmoil in the country will continue and worsen over the coming months. As the unrest is largely in urban centres, the direct impact on the agriculture sector is limited for now. That said, turmoil is likely to have a significant impact on the country’s economy, potentially generating difficulties in supply (blocking of seaport in Basra) and access to



Large-scale political unrest that has flared up since the beginning of October is at risk of continuing and worsening over the coming months. This is likely to have a significant impact on the economy of Iraq, potentially creating difficulties in accessing food.

food. It is also possible that unrest will affect the Government's ability to feed its food insecure population.

- In November, officials in Iraq announced they were preparing for an influx of up to 250 000 people from the Syrian Arab Republic, four times the capacity of the camps to which they are destined, including Bardarash, Domiz or Gawilan. Officials estimate that approximately 70 percent of those displaced are mothers and their children. The continued influx of displaced people from the Syrian Arab Republic could result in increasing needs for livelihood assistance at a time when winter is approaching.

Cash

- Conduct cash-based programmes in targeted areas to support the livelihoods of the most vulnerable crisis-affected households (IDPs and returnees).



Recommended early actions

It is crucial to support off-season rapid crop production and safeguard the livelihoods of the most vulnerable households, 1.77 million IDPs and returnees, to prevent the deterioration of food security resulting from political turmoil and increasing influx of people from the Syrian Arab Republic.

Crops

- Distribute vegetable production kits in crisis-affected IDP and returnee communities in Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninevah and Salah Al-Din by March.

Livestock

- Distribute animal feed and mineral supplements to vulnerable pastoralists in conflict-affected areas and provide livestock vaccinations, particularly in border areas with the Syrian Arab Republic where risk has increased due to cross-border movements of livestock.



The Sudan

Economic challenges will continue to generate elevated food insecurity

5.8 million people severely food insecure

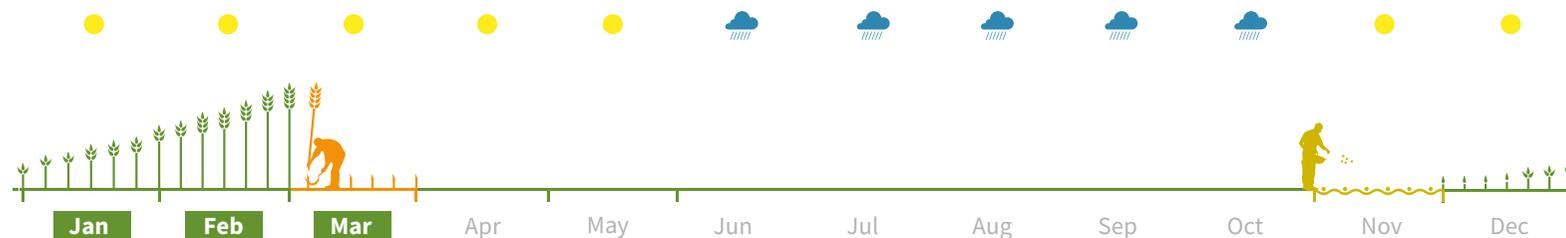
Over **426 000** people affected by heavy rains and flash floods

Risk overview

- Macroeconomic challenges experienced since late 2018 coupled with socio-political changes and uncertainty continue to affect food security in the Sudan. The difficult macroeconomic environment has resulted in soaring prices of fuel and agricultural inputs, which in turn have disrupted public services, inflated agricultural production costs and increased food prices.
- Some progress has been observed in peace talks between the Government and opposition in October 2019. Notably, this has resulted in increasing humanitarian access in southern areas.
- As of September 2019, an estimated 5.8 million people are facing Crisis or worse levels of food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) and are in need of urgent assistance. This figure is the highest on record since the introduction of the IPC analysis in the Sudan. Around 1 million people are facing Emergency levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 4), with a further 4.8 million people in Crisis (IPC Phase 3).
- High staple food prices, persistent insecurity in conflict-affected areas, and flooding in August and September are all contributing to a high need for food and livelihood assistance, with conditions likely to persist into 2020. Furthermore, over 426 000 people have been affected by heavy rains and flash floods across the country in 2019.
- According to the International Monetary Fund, the real GDP, which is estimated to have declined by 2.6 percent in 2019, will further contract by 1.5 percent in 2020. Simultaneously, average

consumer price inflation, estimated at 50 percent in 2019, will increase to 62 percent in 2020. The official exchange rate of the Sudanese Pound vis-à-vis the US dollar stood at 45 SDG/USD in October 2019, however on the parallel market the exchange rate was 76 SDG/USD. Comparatively, the parallel market exchange rate was 69 SDG/USD in September 2019 and 70 SDG/USD in April 2019.

- Wholesale prices of sorghum and millet have been on the rise since 2017. In November 2019, average prices were more than 60 and 50 percent higher than their values one year earlier, respectively. Increasing inflation has also contributed to high production costs.
- Millet and sorghum harvests in the Sudan typically take place in November and December. According to preliminary findings from the 2019/2020 CFSAM, sorghum production is estimated to be below the previous year's level by around 25 percent, and by about 20 percent lower than the average. Millet production is also estimated to decline by about 50 percent from last year's record level. Both declines are due to a general reduction in area planted for summer cereals – as farmers switched to more profitable cash crops – and as a consequence of lower yields resulting from uneven rain distribution (such as dry spells and floods) and the spread of various pests. Wheat production, which will be harvested at the beginning of 2020, is forecast to be higher than last year's levels due to an increase in area planted as a consequence of a higher agreed price for farmers.



The Sudan's macroeconomic crisis will continue to affect the most vulnerable households over the coming months. In particular, internally displaced people and vulnerable households in areas most affected by insecurity, as well as refugees and asylum seekers residing in the country, will face increased difficulties in meeting their food needs.

Potential impact

- The Sudan's macroeconomic crisis will continue to affect the most vulnerable households over the coming months. In particular, IDPs and poor households in areas most affected by insecurity, as well as refugees and asylum seekers residing in the country, will face increased difficulty meeting their food needs as the May–July lean season approaches. Continued currency depreciation, increasing staple food prices, and early exhaustion of food stocks in flood-affected areas are also likely to drive increased humanitarian assistance needs.

Recommended early actions

The potential impact of the macroeconomic crisis on food security calls for early action targeted to the most vulnerable households – especially IDPs, returnees, refugees, and host communities – who will face increasing difficulties in accessing food and agricultural inputs.

Crops

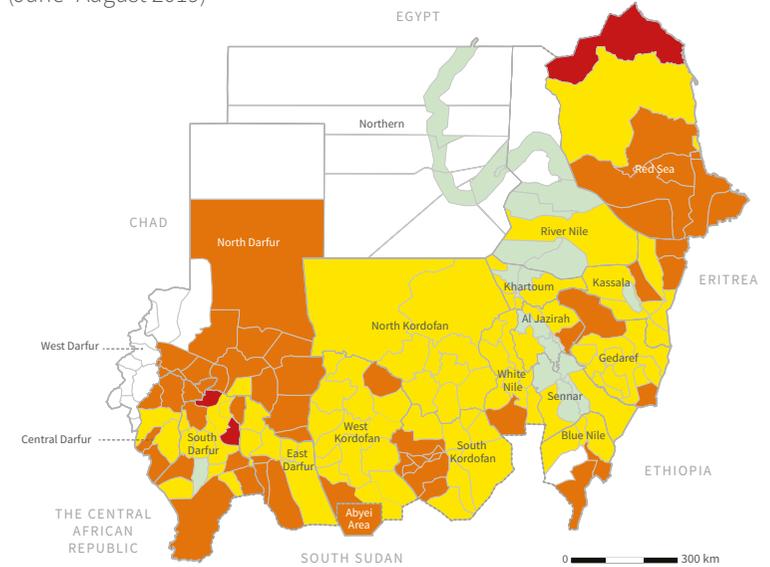
- Where water is available, provide agricultural inputs and tools for off-season crop production in the most vulnerable areas affected by soaring prices.

Livestock

- Provide animal concentrate feed and mineral licks to improve milk and meat production and reproductive capacity.
- Distribute small ruminants (sheep and goats) to vulnerable families.
- Strengthen the surveillance and control of transboundary animal diseases.

Acute food insecurity situation

(June–August 2019)



IPC phase classification



Source: IPC, September 2019



Lebanon

Mounting political crisis to increasingly impact economy, including agriculture and food security



3.3 million people in need of assistance in the country, including **1.5 million** vulnerable Lebanese, **1.5 million** displaced Syrians and **300 000** Palestinian refugees



916 000 Syrian refugees were registered in Lebanon as of the end of November 2019



Risk overview

- Lebanon is traversing a complex political and economic crisis, with significant levels of social unrest throughout the country. An ongoing currency crisis has contributed to the emergence of a parallel exchange market. Already stagnating economic growth is likely to turn into a double-digit recession in 2020. Consumer price inflation is also accelerating; according to WFP, basic consumer basket prices have increased by around 13 percent from mid-October to mid-November, with further increases since then.
- Commercial banks are facing a liquidity crisis and have imposed strict limits on withdrawals of deposits, especially in US Dollars. Given limited liquidity and the suspension of credit lines, businesses are no longer able to secure payment for imports. In addition, foreign-exchange transactions to vendors and suppliers remain difficult due to unclear capital controls. The confidence in the banking system, long considered the pillar of the economy, is rapidly eroding.
- The Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017–2020 estimated that there are about 3.3 million people in need of assistance in the country, including 1.5 million vulnerable Lebanese, 1.5 million displaced Syrians (including unregistered refugees) and 300 000 Palestinian refugees. More than 916 000 Syrian refugees were registered in Lebanon as of the end of November 2019.
- According to GIEWS, the agriculture sector employs 11 percent of the total labor force at national level, however it is a primary source of income and employment in rural areas, where it reaches up to 25 percent of the labor force and 80 percent of local GDP.
- Cereal production in the country is constrained by landscape and covers on average less than 20 percent of the country's consumption needs. According to GIEWS, the 2019 cereal production, harvested in July 2019, was estimated at 7 percent above the 2018 harvest and similar to the five-year average

due to favorable weather conditions. Most winter cereals are typically planted in November after seasonal autumn showers replenish soil moisture. The country is heavily dependent on cereal imports. Conversely, vegetable production is important in terms of GDP contribution, employment and domestic consumption. The production of legumes (faba beans, chickpeas, lentils) is also important particularly for home consumption and local markets.

- Most agricultural inputs (agro-chemicals, seeds, animal feed, etc.) in Lebanon are imported. As a result, agriculture is affected by shortages of US dollars at the official rate, and the devaluating Lebanese Pound on the parallel market. Farmers are already facing sharp increases in input prices, and suppliers are reportedly requesting full-cash payments in hard currency rather than the usual end-of-season payments.



Potential impact

- Prospects of a further deterioration of the economic situation are significant, which could result in continuing shortage of hard currency and a further decline in the value of the Lebanese Pound on the parallel market. This is likely to further affect the food security of vulnerable livelihoods, both Lebanese and refugees, as the declining value of the Lebanese Pound fuels inflation, including food prices.
- The economic crisis is likely to continue to affect all economic sectors, including agriculture. In particular, the increase in the price of agricultural inputs, as well as limited availability of vegetable seeds, might negatively impact the sowing of vegetables in early spring. The crisis is likely to be prolonged thus also affecting the 2020–21 season.

Lebanon is traversing a complex political and economic crisis, with significant levels of social unrest throughout the country. The already stagnating economic growth is likely to turn into a double-digit recession in 2020. As a result, 3.3 million people are estimated to be in need of assistance in the country.



Recommended early actions

Early action is critical to support farmers during the sowing of vegetables in early spring. Support is also necessary to cushion vulnerable households – both local farmers, and the refugee population -from the impact of the economic crisis on food security.

Assessment

- Conduct an assessment to estimate the impact of the economic crisis on agricultural markets, and to assess the needs of agricultural producers, in particular small-scale farmers.
- Formulate an emergency response program to mitigate the impact of the crisis for submission to potential donors.

Policy advice

- Provide the Ministry of Agriculture and other concerned agencies with advice on possible measures to alleviate the import restrictions on agricultural inputs in close consultation with input importers and suppliers.

Cash

- Conduct cash-based programmes in targeted areas to support the most vulnerable rural livelihoods.
- Distribute vouchers for the purchase of agricultural inputs to the most vulnerable farmers in targeted areas.

Vegetables and legumes production

- Distribute vegetable and legumes seeds and agricultural inputs as soon as possible to the most vulnerable farmers.



Mongolia

Potential severe winter conditions likely to affect vulnerable herders



More than **50 percent** of Mongolia is likely to face a high risk of *dzud*



Risk overview

- Mongolia is currently forecast to experience a harsh winter season with an expected high-risk *dzud* in various areas across the country. On 2 January 2020, the Mongolia National Agency for Meteorology and Environmental Monitoring released a map warning that more than 50 percent of the country – eight out of 22 provinces – is likely to face a high-risk of *dzud* in the coming months.
- More specifically, areas with the highest level of risk including Khovd, Gobi-Altai, Uvurkhantai, Dundgobi, Zavkhan, Arkhangai, Bulgan, Khentii, Sukhbaatar and Dornogobi provinces and some areas of Bayan-Ulgii, Uvs, Bayankhongor, Khuvsgul, Tuv, Dornod and Umnugobi provinces are expected to experience a continued extreme lean season with deteriorating conditions in the spring, according to the Mongolian Red Cross Society.
- Historically, during *dzud* periods, it is the most vulnerable herders with access to few resources who are at risk of losing their livelihoods and falling into the poverty trap. During the 2017/18 season, extreme weather conditions (severe summer drought followed by a severe *dzud*) caused high mortality rates of sheep, goats, cattle and camels – animals that traditional herding communities rely on for their livelihoods and survival.
- Furthermore, in January 2019, the first outbreaks of ASF in Mongolia were reported. Since then, 11 ASF outbreaks were confirmed in seven out of 22 provinces. On 27 March 2019, national authorities declared that the ASF epidemic in the country had ended; however, due to the continued existence of the outbreak in bordering countries, vigilance remains necessary.



Potential impact

- As the country has just entered its winter season, the livestock mortality rate is expected to increase as animals are likely to suffer starvation in the aftermath of the harsh winter. The impact of the winter season on livestock is likely to continue until May 2020, as this will coincide with available fresh pasture for grazing animals.
- Rural-to-urban movements are also common following winter periods, as vulnerable herders who have lost their entire stock begin to search for alternative livelihoods.

Mongolia is currently forecast to experience a harsh winter season with an expected high-risk *dzud* in various areas across the country. A similar situation in 2018 caused high mortality rates of livestock, severely affecting the livelihoods of many herding communities across the country. Early action is crucial to safeguard livelihood assets and mitigate the impact of the forecast extreme winter season.



Recommended early actions

Early action interventions are crucial in the face of an extreme lean season to support vulnerable herders in the most-at-risk areas safeguard their livelihood assets.

Crops

- For the upcoming cropping season in May–June, support local farmers through the provision of agricultural inputs to mitigate adverse weather shocks.

Livestock

- Preposition hay and concentrated feed to support livestock survival.
- Provide fodder with a high content of protein, vitamins and minerals, particularly for pregnant livestock or yearlings.
- Strengthen livestock disease surveillance and control operations.



Independent State of Samoa

Measles epidemic has spread in Samoa and neighboring Pacific Island nations, prompting close monitoring for its potential impact on food security



5 697 measles cases and **83** deaths have been reported since the outbreak of measles in October 2019 – this corresponds to over **2.8 percent** of the population



Risk overview

- As of October 2019, Samoa has been fighting a measles epidemic. The epidemic, which is believed to have been picked up in late August during the recent outbreak in New Zealand, has spread rapidly across the country. Prior to the outbreak, according to the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children’s Fund, only 31 percent of children had received one of two doses of the measles vaccine, allowing the virus to spread quickly.
- Over the past two months, the outbreak has continued to spread across the two main islands of Upolu and Savai’i. As of 6 January 2019, the Government of Samoa reported 5 697 confirmed cases of the virus and 83 deaths, primarily children under the age of five. Approximately 98 percent of the measles cases come from Upolu and are notably concentrated in the Vaimauga West and Faleata West districts.
- As more than 2.8 percent of the population has already been affected by the disease and numbers continue to grow, the Government of Samoa launched a State of Emergency for 30 days from 15 November 2019. Coupled with this declaration, the Government has enforced several regulations to help curb the spread of the virus. Such measures include mandatory immunisation, the closure of all schools and children being barred from public gatherings.
- On 2 December, the Government of Samoa announced a two-day nationwide mass vaccination campaign on 5–6 December and instructed the shutdown of all non-essential public and private services to enforce the operation and contain the spread of the disease. The shutdown restricts movement, both by car and boat within and between the two main islands. All members of the public were also asked and encouraged to remain at their places of residence.

- Over two-thirds of Samoans are employed directly or indirectly in the agriculture sector and much of the economy is based on primary agricultural production. While the correlation between the epidemic and food security appears to be limited, continuous monitoring of the risk and how it could impact the sector should be employed.
- The disease has further spread within the Pacific Region. Fiji and Tonga are, so far, the most affected but have higher immunisation rates than the Independent State of Samoa, sitting at 95 percent and 85 percent respectively. In Fiji, there are 27 confirmed cases and over 512 in Tonga. As of 31 December 2019, two more island nations reported their first cases of measles, with American Samoa reporting 9 confirmed occurrences and Kiribati reporting 2.



Potential impact

- Scientists at New Zealand’s University of Auckland and Auckland Bioengineering Institute are expecting the outbreak to impact more than 6 500 people (or 3 percent of the population) in Samoa. However, as of December, 95 percent of the population has been confirmed as vaccinated, therefore it is likely the amount of cases will curtail over the next three months.
- The epidemic could potentially become a regional issue if not closely monitored. While the immunisation rates in other island states are higher, there are large sections of the population that are susceptible to the disease – for example, in Vanuatu 25 percent of the population are not immunised with Papua New Guinea sitting at 39 percent.

While the correlation between the measles epidemic and food security appears to be limited, continuous monitoring of the risk and how it could impact the sector should be employed, not only in Samoa but across the Pacific Islands region.



Recommended early actions

While the relationship between the epidemic and food security is minimal, it is important to closely watch the situation and study trends, not only in Samoa but also across the Pacific Islands region.

Monitoring and Communication

- Establish surveillance and monitoring systems on how food security could be affected by the spread of measles.

Early Warning Early Action
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

For more information

ewea@fao.org

www.fao.org/emergencies/fao-in-action/ewea

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