GIEWS Country Brief
Cameroon

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FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT
• Food production in 2021 likely to be affected by conflicts and COVID-19 restrictive measures
• Slow trade activity and strong consumer demand contribute to keeping food prices high
• About 1.9 million people projected to be severely food insecure in June-August 2021

Food production in 2021 likely to be affected by conflicts and COVID-19 restrictive measures
In the uni-modal rainfall northern areas, planting of the 2021 millet and sorghum crops is ongoing and harvesting is expected to begin in late September. Latest weather forecasts point to average precipitation amounts between July and September 2021, with likely positive effects on yields. In bi-modal central and southern areas, harvesting of the 2021 early planted main maize crop will begin in mid-August. In these areas, heavy rains are forecast in July and August, increasing the risk of flooding, with consequent possible damage to standing maize crops.

Ongoing conflicts in Northwest and Southwest regions, and the restrictive measures implemented across the country to control the COVID-19 pandemic, are expected to continue affecting agricultural activities and limiting farmers’ access to crop growing areas and inputs, with an overall negative impact on the 2021 crop production.

Slow trade activity and strong consumer demand contribute to keeping food prices high
Prices of imported food commodities, such as wheat and rice, increased slightly between March and May 2021, in line with seasonal trends. Prices in May were at high levels as movement restrictions used to contain the spread of the COVID-19 virus disrupted transport at regional level and slowed down trade. For instance, rice imports in the first quarter of 2021 were about 30 percent lower than at the same period in 2020, when COVID-19 preventive measures were not yet in place.

In the northern regions, prices of locally produced sorghum and onions, increased in line with seasonal trends in March-May 2021, reaching slightly above-average levels, due to strong demand from Nigeria and the Central African Republic,
after the reopening of the borders restored formal and informal trade flows.

In the Northwest and Southwest regions, staple food prices also seasonally increased to above-average levels due to low market supplies and strong consumer demand following the reduced harvests. In addition, due to the high level of prices for imported rice, increased household demand for locally produced cassava, plantain and maize provided further upward pressure on local prices, especially in urban areas as COVID-19 containment measures increased transportation costs.

**About 1.9 million people projected to be severely food insecure in June-August 2021**

According to the March 2021 *Cadre Harmonisé* (CH) analysis, about 1.9 million people (7 percent of the total population) were projected to be severely food insecure (CH Phase 3: “Crisis” or above) in the June-August 2021 period. This mainly results from the impacts of Boko Haram incursions in the Far North Region, the socio-political unrest in the Northwest and Southwest regions and COVID-19 related economic shocks, which disrupted trade flows and agricultural practices, deteriorated livelihoods and displaced people. About 42 percent of the severely food insecure people are located in Northwest and Southwest regions.

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