



GIEWS Update

The Republic of Madagascar

Increasing severity and prevalence of food insecurity in southern parts of the country

Highlights

- Alarming number of people facing severe acute food insecurity in southern regions.
- Low harvests and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic underpin the current conditions.
- Immediate scaling up and extension of humanitarian response required, including assistance to farming households prior to the start of the next agricultural season.

The southern regions of the country are facing a humanitarian crisis. The prevalence and severity of food insecurity have increased in 2021 in the southern regions of Androy, Anosy and Atsimo Andrefana and conditions are projected to worsen by the end of the year, according to the latest [IPC analysis](#) that confirms earlier assessments by [GIEWS](#).

In the post-harvest period between April and September, the number of people facing acute

food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 [Crisis] and above) is estimated at 1.14 million, about 43 percent of the analyzed population, compared to a rate of 35 percent in the January–March period. This number is projected to increase to 1.31 million (49 percent of the analyzed population) in the October–December 2021 period, 24 percent higher on a yearly basis.

Of particular concern is the increasing number of people in the most severe food insecure

Table 1: Madagascar - Number of people facing high levels of acute food insecurity in Androy, Anosy and Atsimo Andrefana regions, 2021

	April-September (current situation)	October-December (projected situation)
Phase 5 (Catastrophe)	14 000	28 000
Phase 4 (Emergency)	392 000	484 000
Phase 3 (Crisis)	732 000	801 000
Phase 2 (Stressed)	996 000	915 000
Phase 1 (Food security)	550 000	464 000
TOTAL (IPC Phase 3 and above)	1 140 000	1 310 000

Source: Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) - [Acute Food Insecurity Analysis, Madagascar, May 2021](#).

categories, IPC Phase 4 (Emergency) and Phase 5 (Catastrophe). Currently, an estimated 0.4 million people are assessed to be in these categories, but this number is projected to increase to more than 0.5 million in the last quarter of 2021, of which about 28 000 people (twice the number in April–September) would be in Phase 5 (Catastrophe). Households assessed to be facing Phase 5 (Catastrophe) conditions are expected to have an extreme lack of food and other basic needs, even after utilizing available coping strategies, and require urgent assistance to save lives and avoid a collapse of livelihoods.

The factors underlying the high rates and severity of food insecurity in 2021 are the impact of drought conditions on agricultural production in 2021 (following several years of already low harvests) and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the national economy, underpinned by a chronic high rate of poverty that renders the affected population highly vulnerable to shocks. Significant rainfall deficits since October 2020, which normally marks the start of the main agricultural season, resulted in a reduced area planted and low crop yields and, consequently, the 2021 harvest in the three southern regions is estimated to be well below the five-year average. FAO is in the process of assessing the final production outcomes. The poor harvests

resulted in reduced household food supplies and a loss of income-earning opportunities through crop sales. In addition, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic that have weighed on the overall economic performance of the country, caused job and incomes losses, particularly from non-farm activities, eroding households' ability to purchase food during a year when household supplies are unusually low and further diminishing their capacity to remain resilient to the health, economic and weather shocks. The impact of the pandemic triggered a 3 percentage-point increase in the rate of poverty to 77 percent (an additional 1.38 million people) in 2020.

The next agricultural season in southern regions is expected to begin in October 2021 and early weather forecasts indicate a higher-than-normal likelihood of below-average rainfall during the first three months. Given the possibility of a delayed start of the agricultural season that could further aggravate conditions, an extension and immediate scaling up of ongoing food and livelihood assistance are urgently required. In addition, [agricultural support](#) should be provided to farming households well in advance of the start of the season to bolster productive capacities and ensure that households are sufficiently equipped to produce this season.

This report was prepared by the **Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS)** of the Markets and Trade Division of FAO. The updates focus on developing anomalous conditions aimed at providing early warnings, as well as latest and more elaborate information than other GIEWS regular reports on the food security situation of countries, at both national and sub-national levels. None of the information in this report should be regarded as statements of governmental views.

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