GIEWS Country Brief
The Congo

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FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT
- Floods in late 2021 damaged standing maize crops in affected areas
- National gross domestic product (GDP) continued to decline in 2021
- State of emergency declared in late 2021 due to floods

Floods in late 2021 affected standing maize crops in affected areas
The main food crop is cassava, which is cultivated throughout the year, alternatively in northern and southern regions, depending on the rainy season. A limited quantity of cereals is grown in the country, mainly maize, which is largely used for the production of livestock feed.

Harvesting of the 2021 main season maize crop finalized last January and the output is estimated at a near-average level, following overall beneficial weather conditions during the season, which had a positive impact on yields. However, heavy rainfall since September 2021 triggered floods, which resulted in localized losses of standing maize crops in Likouala, Sangha, Cuvette and Plateaux departments.

Planting of the 2022 secondary season maize crop, to be harvested in June and July, is ongoing under overall favourable weather conditions. According to satellite-based imagery, precipitation amounts have been adequate and well distributed since December 2021 in most croplands, benefitting soil moisture levels. However, weather forecasts until May point to below-average rainfall amounts in most croplands, which may negatively affect yields.

National GDP continued to decline in 2021
Agriculture contributes to a small portion of the national GDP, reflecting the predominance of the petroleum industry. The national GDP contracted by about 8 percent in 2020, owing to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on global oil prices (which fell sharply due to weak demand) and on the country’s economy. In 2021, the GDP is estimated to have declined by 1.2 percent, as the need of large maintenance work (that had been delayed by
the pandemic) curbed crude oil production capacity.

Domestic cereal production covers only a small portion of the consumption requirements and imports account for approximately 90 percent of the total cereal utilization. With a population of about 5.6 million, the total cereal imports for the 2021 marketing year (January/December) are estimated at 250 000 tonnes, including 134 000 tonnes of wheat, well below the average level due to high wheat international prices, and 90 000 tonnes of rice.

**State of emergency declared in late 2021 due to floods**

The country hosts about 64 800 refugees and asylum seekers from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic, mostly located in the northern Likouala Department. The refugees’ food security is essentially guaranteed by continued humanitarian assistance.

On 29 November 2021, a state of emergency was declared as floods affected about 72 000 people in Likouala, Sangha, Cuvette and Plateaux departments.

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