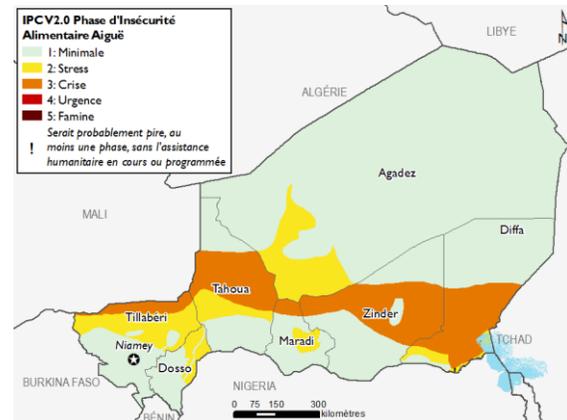


Extended lean season in pastoral areas means some households are facing food insecurity

KEY MESSAGES

- The pastoral area is experiencing a longer and more difficult lean season than normal. Livestock is hard to sell, terms of trade for cereals continue to worsen and livestock farmers are being forced to reduce the size of their herds, placing some households in Crisis (IPC Phase 3), as observed in June and July 2018.
- Land was sown in 46 percent of agricultural and agropastoral villages as of June 10, 2018. Most poor households in agricultural areas can cover their food needs using income from agricultural labor. They were facing Minimal (IPC Phase 1) food insecurity in June 2018 and will do until January 2019.
- Markets are stocked with staple foods – both local products and products from neighboring countries (Burkina Faso, Mali, Benin and Nigeria) – but at a lower volume than normal. Prices on the main markets are above the seasonal average, where they are likely to remain throughout the lean season.
- Displaced populations in the Diffa region continue to suffer the effects of the civil conflict related to Boko Haram, which is impacting their livelihoods and their access to food. Their inability to undertake their livelihood activities coupled with the reduced level of food aid puts them in Crisis (IPC Phase 3), which could persist in the region until January 2019 at the earliest.

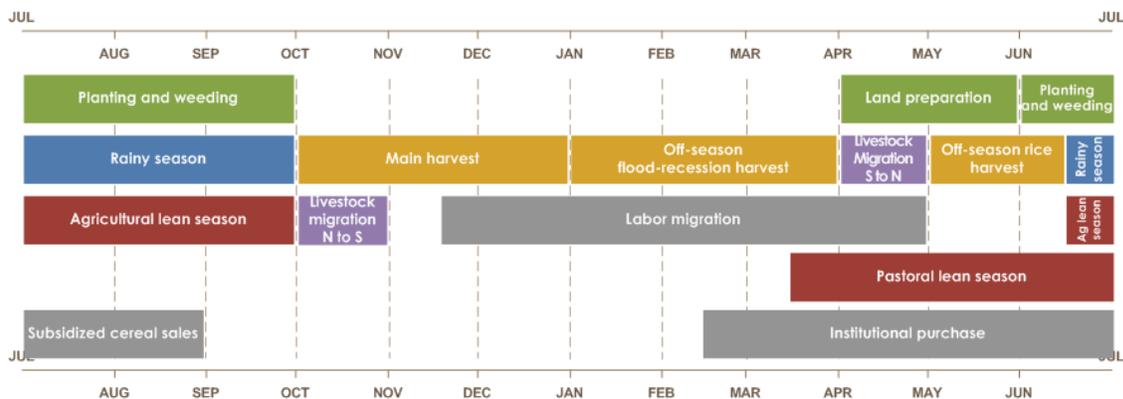
Current food security outcomes, June 2018



Source: FEWS NET

FEWS NET classification is IPC-compatible. IPC-compatible analysis follows key IPC protocols but does not necessarily reflect the consensus of national food security partners.

SEASONAL CALENDAR FOR A TYPICAL YEAR



Source: FEWS NET

NATIONAL OVERVIEW

Current Situation

The pastoral area is experiencing an unusual lean season that is impacting poor households' livelihoods and access to food: in April 2018, a meeting to re-evaluate the food, nutrition and pastoral situation held in Dosso highlighted the depletion of natural pastures and crop residues, deterioration in the livestock body conditions of and a worsening of terms of trade for livestock and cereals.

The pastoral situation is particularly difficult in locations where herds are concentrated, in the departments of Bermo, Bélbedji, Aderbissenat, Ingall, Tchintabaraden and Abalak, where water sources and some strategic forage reserves remain. The situation is even more critical in N'Gourti, in the Diffa region, given the inaccessibility of the Lake Chad and Komadougou reserves following the introduction of security measures.

Market demand for livestock is weak, and prices and terms of trade have seen a significant decrease. The food situation of poor livestock-farming households is marked by reduced access to food and significant pressure on livestock capital to cover food expenses in the face of price hikes for consumer goods.

The agricultural growing season for irrigated rice and market garden crops concluded with average harvests and gave way to a rainfed crops campaign that is gradually beginning in the country's agricultural and agropastoral zones: this growing season enabled households in areas with irrigated land to access income and food, helping to cover their needs up to June 2018. These areas have also provided employment opportunities for people from areas with no access to irrigation, and the income they earn there has been transferred to their original households. Day laborers cultivating market garden crops are paid between XOF 1,500 and 2,000.

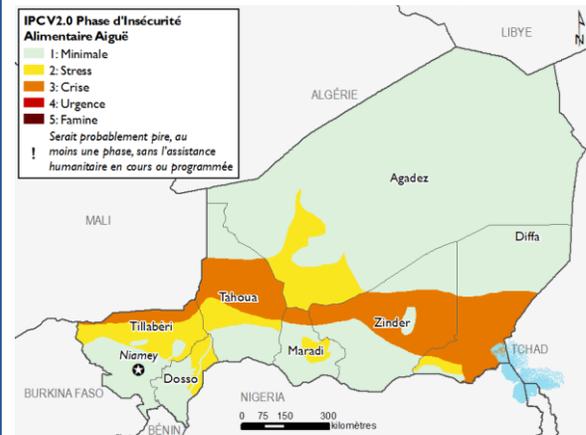
The beginning of the rainfed agricultural season has been similar to last year. The first rains allowed for partial sowing in several of the country's agricultural areas. Of the 12,464 agricultural villages monitored by the Department of Statistics, around 46 percent had sown millet by 10 June 2018, compared with 46, 68 and 32 percent in the same period in 2017, 2016 and 2015, respectively.

The markets are benefiting from improved trade with Nigeria and from government interventions: the availability of cereal on the market is generally satisfactory. Supply is guaranteed by provisions from the network of importers of millet, maize and sorghum, coming mainly from Nigeria, Benin and Burkina Faso. Supply is also bolstered by the Government's stock of 80,000 tons of cereals, which has been put on sale at reduced prices by the Government since February 2018 throughout the country. Demand comprises mostly households, particularly livestock farmers, who purchase for their own consumption. The normal cross-border flows from Nigeria to the Diffa region are relatively inactive owing to the civil conflict affecting the road network.

Compared with the average over the last five years, prices are following an unusual seasonal trend, fluctuating between 16 and 30 percent above average in markets in agricultural areas.

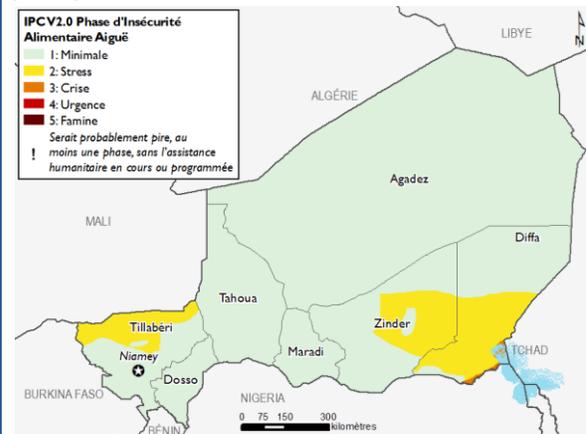
Developments in the security situation suggest that conditions are worsening, and the affected areas are expanding: the security situation remains a cause for concern in the north of the Tillabéry region, as well as in the Diffa region. According to

Projected food security outcomes, June to September 2018



Source: FEWS NET

Projected food security outcomes, September 2018 to January 2018



Source: FEWS NET

FEWS NET classification is IPC-compatible. IPC-compatible analysis follows key IPC protocols but does not necessarily reflect the consensus of national food security partners.

the situation report, updated in October 2017 by the Regional Directorate for Civil Status, Migration and Refugees, 252,305 people (including 129,015 internally displaced persons) remain displaced in the Diffa region, either in camps and host areas. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, attacks between communities along with military security operations in the area have caused the internal displacement of around 15,000 people in the Tillabéry region, mainly in the departments of Ayorou, Ouallam and Banibangou. Displaced persons depend largely on humanitarian assistance to cover their basic needs.

The nutritional situation is evolving according to the seasonal trend, indicating a serious situation: the last Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions (SMART) survey, data for which were collected in August 2016 by UNICEF in collaboration with the National Institute of Statistics, the *Système d'Alerte Précoce* (SAP) and technical partners, revealed an overall acute malnutrition rate of 10.3 percent at the national level. This rate is a decrease on the different rates identified by the previous five surveys. Additionally, according to the results of the Health Directorate's last report, there was a 13 percent decrease in the annual number of admissions for integrated care for acute malnutrition in 2017 compared with 2016. Nevertheless, the nutritional situation remains a cause for concern during this lean season, particularly given the increased number of severe malnutrition cases this year, following poor funding for care for moderate cases.

Food aid to mitigate the worsening of households' food situation: the Government, with the aid of its partners, has drawn up and implemented an annual plan to support vulnerable households, selling 80,000 tons of cereals and 23,000 tons of livestock feed at reduced prices. In areas with significant levels of food insecurity, the targeted distribution of free foodstuffs was undertaken between March and June 2018, in the form of 100 kg of cereals per household per month. Households in areas with extreme and moderate levels of vulnerability received emergency aid in the form of seeds; seven tons were distributed at a volume of 15 kg per household (10 kg of cereal seeds and 5 kg of legume seeds). In areas where households are deemed to be moderately vulnerable, assistance consisted of 'cash for work' and benefited around 1 million people, amounting to XOF 1,300 per person per day between February and May 2018.

Food security outcomes: in agricultural areas, food access and consumption are guaranteed by food and income from rice and market crop harvests, indicating Minimal (IPC Phase 1) food insecurity. On the other hand, food needs in part of the agropastoral zone are hardly being met because stocks have been exhausted, and some strategies, such as the sale of wood and straw, have become impossible owing to security measures and the state of emergency that has been declared in some areas. This situation, together with the lack of resources for non-food spending, is leading to Stressed (IPC Phase 2) food insecurity outcomes. In pastoral areas, consumption in poor households is barely sufficient, despite crisis strategies such as the mass sale of livestock (two to three times more than normal), placing them in Crisis (IPC Phase 3).

Assumptions

- The most likely food security scenario from June 2018 to January 2019 is based on the following assumptions:
- According to the forecasts of international and national meteorological agencies (including the United States Geological Survey and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration), normal to excess cumulative rainfall is expected across the country throughout the season.
- Market availability will be supported by traders anticipating the good agricultural growing season, but stock could be retained during dry spells.
- From October 2018, harvests from the rainy agricultural growing season should be around average or above.
- Household stocks will return to normal levels following the October harvests and should last until at least January 2019.
- Public and institutional stocks will return to optimal levels between November 2018 and January 2019 and should exert pressure on demand and on prices in local markets.
- State institutions and structures will have sufficient stock to implement support plans for vulnerable populations and those in crisis between June 2018 and January 2019.

- Poor households will benefit from average income from agricultural labor related to rainfed crops.
- Other sources of income, such as small-scale trade, crafts and the sale of straw and wood, will boost households' purchasing power.
- The state of emergency will be extended in the regions of Diffa, Tillabéry and Tahoua, and will remain in place throughout the scenario period. Communal disputes between livestock farmers and crop farmers will also continue.
- Ongoing civil conflict in Nigeria and Libya – destination countries for migrants – will continue to disrupt income from this migration between November 2018 and January 2019.
- Cross-border flows (Benin, Togo, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso and Mali) will continue normally and will supply Niger's local markets.
- Flows from Nigeria will be below average due to an increase in prices in source markets and in exchange rates.
- Internal flows will behave normally and will serve isolated markets and those in areas with structural deficits.
- Cereal prices should remain above the five-year average in most markets between June and September 2018 owing to the high demand caused by poor harvests the previous year. They will then stabilize between October 2018 and January 2019, but remain above average.
- Cash crops will follow the same trend because of export demand.
- In line with the seasonal trend, an increase in admissions of acute malnutrition cases is anticipated in care centers during the lean season between June and September 2018.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

Income-generating opportunities from normal agricultural and off-farm labor activities will enable most households in agricultural areas in Maradi, Tahoua, Zinder and the south of Tillabéry to access food and cover their food needs. Throughout the scenario period, households in these agricultural areas will be at Minimal (IPC Phase 1), for the most part.

However, poor households in the agropastoral zone in the regions of Tillabéry and Tahoua cannot meet all of their food needs without the food aid given each year to the most vulnerable households during the lean season. And even then, poor households cannot meet all of their non-food needs. Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes will therefore be felt in most poor households in this agropastoral zone from June 2018 to at least January 2019.

In pastoral areas, food conditions will be most difficult in June and at the beginning of July, following an early and prolonged lean season. However, August will begin to see improvements with the establishment of pastures and the progressive improvement of the livestock body conditions of, as well as their market value; these areas will therefore gradually move from Crisis (IPC Phase 3) to Minimal (IPC Phase 1).

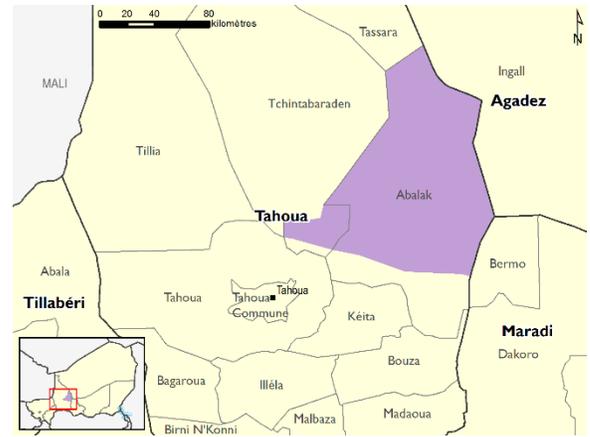
AREAS OF CONCERN

The Abalak pastoral area in the Tahoua region (livelihood zone 03)

The area’s economy relies mainly on livestock farming, trade and migrant work. Livestock farmers own cattle, sheep, goats and camels in roughly equal proportions, as well as smaller numbers of horses and donkeys. The main sources of income for poor and very poor households include the sale of livestock and animal products, herding and transfers from migration. Rainfall in this area varies between 100 and 200 mm.

Markets are important for livelihoods in pastoral areas because they are essential for the sale of livestock and animal products, but also, and above all, because they supply households with cereals – a significant component of livestock farmers’ diets. The cereals bought and consumed come mainly from agricultural areas in the south of Niger and from Nigeria.

Figure 1. Area of concern: Abalak



Source: FEWS NET

Current Situation

Availability of livestock feed

The current condition of pastures varies greatly because rainfall has been uneven. Nevertheless, it remains concerning in several areas because the recorded rainfall has damaged any residual straw. These rains have also caused grass cover to appear, which is currently inaccessible to large livestock. In some areas, particularly Agadez and Tillabéry, young sprouts are drying up following a drought and strong winds. In the departments of the agricultural zone, animals are finding rainfed crop residues, straw from the brush, flood recession crops and forage in forest areas. In all, the existing forage is insufficient to meet the animals’ needs. Consequently, the physical condition of livestock is adequate or mediocre.

According to the situation report on the pastoral growing season, published by the Pastoral Development Directorate in November 2017, the forage deficit recorded in the area was 1,155,659 tons of dry matter – a 79.44 percent deficit. Local forage production has only been able to cover around two months’ consumption for local livestock.

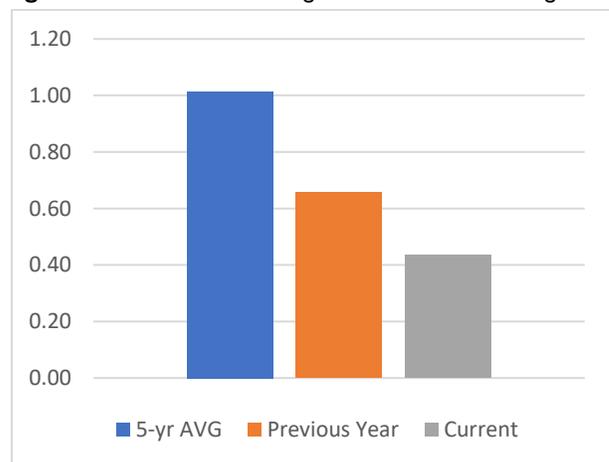
Household food access and availability

Households no longer have stocks of cereals following the deficits recorded in several of the country’s agricultural and agropastoral areas. Market purchases represent households’ main food source, despite government operations to sell cereals at reduced prices, which have bolstered availability. Households in agricultural and agropastoral zones are purchasing cereals using income from agricultural labor and from the cash for work programs implemented by the Government. Pastoral households are undertaking mass sales of livestock – to obtain standard quantities of food, they are required to sell between two and three times more livestock owing to the decrease in market value. Supplies come from internal flows from local markets, such as in Maradi and Tahoua, and from cross-border flows originating in Nigeria.

Markets and prices

Markets continue to have good supplies of cereals and livestock. Consumer prices for cereals are 19 percent higher than the five-year average. There is a large supply of livestock owing to the mass sales undertaken by households to meet their economic needs. The naira exchange rate remains below average, which does not favor exports to Nigeria. However, purchases for slaughter continue to take place, following a normal trend and mainly involving small ruminants.

Figure 2. Terms of trade for goats/millet in Abalak, Niger



Source: FEWS NET

Despite a relative uptick in exports to Nigeria, livestock prices are currently experiencing significant drops. In April 2018, goat prices saw a significant drop of more than 50 percent on the five-year average and a reduction of more than 20 percent in comparison with the same period the previous year. This weakens livestock farmers' purchasing power and limits food access against a backdrop of increased expenses for maintaining livestock (Figure 2).

Other sources of income

Other income-generating activities, such as the sale of straw and herding, are being undertaken as usual and generate standard incomes.

The production and sale of milk are below average, but the price per liter of milk is currently between XOF 300 and 400, in line with the seasonal trend.

Food security outcomes

Households are consuming food in sufficient amounts but are not eating a varied diet owing to a lack of dairy products, which usually form part of their diet. Households' are ensuring access to normal quantities of products through the mass sale of livestock (two to three times more animals sold), leaving them with smaller herds, which are their main livelihood. The food security outcome is Crisis (IPC Phase 3).

Assumptions

The most likely food security scenario from June 2018 to January 2019 is based on the following assumptions:

- Between August and September 2018, the availability of forage and water will enable animals to feed well, improving their body condition, milk production, market value and the terms of trade for cereals until January 2019.
- Milk prices will be average between June 2018 and January 2019.
- There will be increased demand for animals in the run-up to Tabaski (Eid al-Adha) between July and September 2018, and during end-of-year celebrations between October 2018 and January 2019.
- There will be a slight improvement in livestock prices between August 2018 and January 2019, although they will remain largely below average.
- Income from the sale of livestock and dairy products will be below average at the start of the projection period.
- Cereal prices will rise above the five-year average throughout the scenario period.
- The Government's social program that sells livestock feed at reduced prices will continue until the end of July to reduce the financial burdens related to maintaining livestock.
- More livestock than usual will be sent to market in June and July to cover increasing food costs given the high price of consumer goods.
- Demand for animal exports to Nigeria will be low as a result of the naira exchange rate.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

In June and July, food purchases will hardly cover households' food consumption and diet will be unvaried. Bartering, in-kind payments and solidarity systems will contribute little to food access; purchases will therefore represent households' main source of food. These purchases will place strong pressure on livestock capital, with numbers reducing sharply because of worsening terms of trade in relation to food products. The food security outcome is Crisis (IPC Phase 3).

Between August 2018 and January 2019, food purchases will sufficiently cover households' food consumption, which will comprise milk and other livestock products. Own consumption of milk and dairy products, and the purchase of cereal will serve as essential sources of food. Owing to livestock prices, which will remain below average, the number of livestock being

sold will remain high, although below the levels seen at the start of the period. The food security outcomes indicate Stressed (IPC Phase 2) food insecurity.

For more information on the analysis of this area, see the [scenario summary table](#).

The pepper-growing area in Komadougou, Diffa (livelihood zone 12)

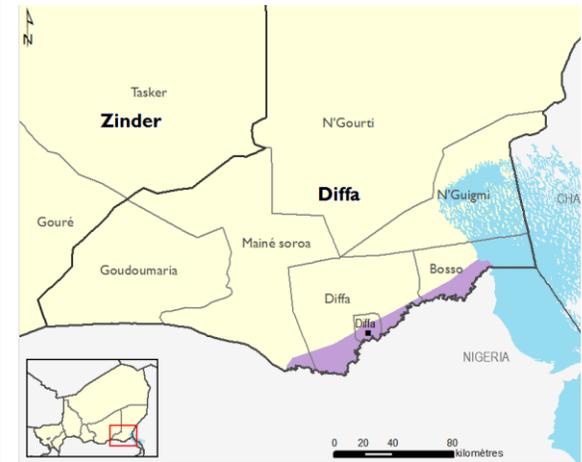
This livelihood zone is characterized by the irrigated production of red peppers, known as ‘red gold’ owing to their high market value. The site sits on the north bank of the Komadougou river, which runs for around 160 kilometers along the southeast border with Nigeria and ultimately flows into Lake Chad. The peppers, which are dried before being sold, have value on the Nigerian cross-border markets, although they are also sold further west, in the rest of Niger. Flood recession crops are also grown in this area, as well as irrigated rice and small amounts of market garden crops (including tomatoes, cabbage, okra, chilis and other vegetables). Fishing is a minor seasonal activity.

Livestock farming is the area’s second-biggest economic sector. The animals bred in the area are mainly large ruminants (cattle) and small ruminants such as goats and sheep, as well as poultry.

The various sources of food that households can access and the manner in which they access them differ from one group to another; wealthy and average households have less issue in meeting their food needs. The biggest sources are purchases, subsistence farming, food aid, animal production and payment in kind. There is also fishing and picking, particularly for the poor and very poor households.

For all household groups, the largest proportion of income comes from cultivating and selling red peppers. Wealthy and average households also have access to income from the sale of livestock and from trade. However, poor and very poor households depend on casual labor and agricultural work; they are paid in bags of peppers, which they then sell on. Income from the sale of cereals is very low for all income groups, owing to the fact that agricultural production is used for own consumption.

Figure 3. Area of concern: Komadougou



Source: FEWS NET

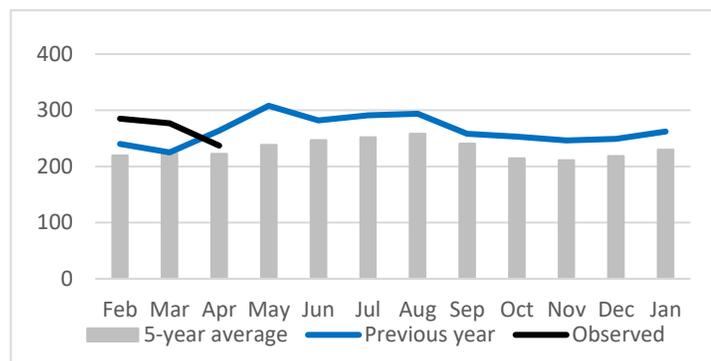
Current Situation

Food sources

Farmers’ stocks were depleted following the deficit in agricultural production last year. Purchases and food aid provide the main sources of food for households. Availability on the markets is adequate, but purchase prices are higher than the average of the last five years.

Income from peppers has decreased significantly, particularly for poor households that are paid in kind and then sell on their bags of peppers, because the reduction in the area sown with peppers discourages the wealthy from employing labor.

Figure 4. Price of maize in Diffa, Niger, in April 2018 (XOF/kg)



Source: FEWS NET

Humanitarian assistance

The humanitarian response in the Diffa region is intended to reach 318,414 people. According to the Food Security Cluster, six actors have been active in the region since January 2018, namely the International Committee of the Red Cross, Action

Against Hunger, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Oxfam, the International Rescue Committee, and the World Food Program and its partners. Their interventions consisted of general food distribution and cash distributions, as well as agropastoral support in the form of supplies and feed for livestock.

Table 1. Food assistance in Diffa region between January and March 2018

Food assistance Jan–Mar 2018					
Month	Target	Beneficiaries reached	Tonnage distributed	Cash distributed (XOF)	Coverage rate
January	318,414	218,975	2,336	365,852,500	69
February	318,414	272,188	3,094	309,855,000	85
March	318,414	248,037	2,395	366,340,000	78
Average	318,414	246,400	2,608	347,349,167	77

Source: Food Security Cluster, WFP

Sources of income

Peppers are the main source of income in a typical year. Their current sale price has surpassed the prices seen in the last two years and is significantly higher than the average of non-crisis years, at between XOF 20,000 and 22,000 per bag, compared with an average of XOF 10,000 to 12,000 before the security crisis. However, sown areas have diminished by around 70 percent following security problems, leading to a significant decrease in income for all household groups.

The sale of wood, charcoal and straw provides income for poor households, but this has decreased due to strong competition. The same is true for small-scale trade and loading/unloading work at the market.

Security situation in the area and population movement

Table 2. Situation of refugees, returning refugees and internally displaced persons – updated October 2017

Total population		Refugees		Returning refugees		Internally displaced persons	
Households	Persons	Households	Persons	Households	Persons	Households	Persons
52,291	252,305	23,006	108,470	2,907	14,820	26,378	129,015

Source: Regional Directorate for Civil Status, Migration and Refugees

Nutrition

The period between January and March 2018 saw a significant increase in admissions to nutrition rehabilitation centers, in terms of both outpatients (Centers for Outpatient Nutritional Rehabilitation for Moderate Malnutrition (CRENAM) and Centers for Outpatient Nutritional Rehabilitation for Severe Malnutrition (CRENAS)) and inpatients (Intensive Nutritional Rehabilitation Centers (CRENI)), compared with 2017.

There are several reasons for these increases, including the screening campaigns organized by several partners (Karkara, SP, SOS Sahel Village, Médecins Sans Frontières France, Action Against Hunger and Service Civil International) over the period, reaching a larger number of children aged between 6 and 23 months. The region has an overall acute malnutrition prevalence rate of 13.9 percent according to the latest SMART survey (November–December 2017), indicating that Diffa is in a worrying situation.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

Poor households depend on food aid, given their depleted stocks and weak purchasing power on the market. According to the Food Security Cluster, food aid reaches 70 percent of the targeted households in the Diffa region. Poor households usually receive income in the form of in kind payment to tend and harvest pepper crops. As a result of the reduction in sown areas, they are losing this livelihood, which represents between 50 and 75 percent of their income. Despite a livelihood protection deficit, humanitarian assistance ensures that even the poorest households have a minimum level of food consumption. The food security outcomes therefore indicate a Stress! (IPC Phase 2!) situation.

Assumptions

The most likely food security scenario from June 2018 to January 2019 is based on the following assumptions:

- In terms of security, ongoing attacks by Boko Haram will keep the area in a state of emergency.
- The Boko Haram conflict and associated security measures will result in a significant reduction in pepper production of more than 70 percent between June and September 2018.
- The demand for labor to cultivate peppers will decline sharply, leading to a drop in incomes.
- The supply of peppers will be lower than normal.
- Sales of wood and charcoal will increase and income from these sales will be above average.
- Demand for peppers will be average; sale prices will be higher than last year and higher than the average price before the security crisis.
- The markets will continue to feel the ongoing effects of the crisis.
- Following the withdrawal of certain partners and the low levels of funding granted to some sectors, there has been a gradual decrease in food aid and in the treatment of malnourished children.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

Between June and September 2018, food aid will remain stable, but the withdrawal of certain humanitarian partners will lead to a further decrease in the coverage of food needs. Some households will encounter difficulties in meeting their food consumption needs. Despite adopting strategies such as selling water, straw and wood, the loss of income from peppers will lead to a significant reduction in livelihoods.

Between October 2018 and January 2019, consumption deficits will persist because of the low incomes available for buying food and insufficient food aid to cover the food needs of the entire target population. Financial capital will decrease sharply following the loss of livelihoods linked to the sale of peppers.

Food insecurity will be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) between June and September 2018, where it will remain between October 2018 and January 2019.

For more information on the analysis of this area, see the [scenario summary table](#).

EVENTS THAT MIGHT CHANGE THE OUTLOOK

Table I. Possible events over the next eight months that could change the most-likely scenario.

Area	Event	Impact on food security outcomes
National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dry periods lasting longer than anticipated • Military interventions to maintain stability • Low flows of cereals from Mali, Burkina Faso, Benin and Nigeria • Weak implementation of the national aid plan • Recurrence of conflicts in Nigeria or Mali, with increased population displacement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor agricultural and forage production • Internal population movement in the regions of Tillabéry and Tahoua • Reduction in supplies on the markets • Price increases • Reduced food availability • Limited flow of products • Increase in the number of refugees
Pepper-growing area of Diffa (zone 12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unusual winter season • Disruption to the market system in Niger and Nigeria in terms of the supply flow to local markets • New developments in the Boko Haram conflict 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the number of refugees • Increase in the demand for cereals, the supply of labor and food prices – above seasonal trends • Unusual decrease in purchasing power, with livelihood protection deficits
Pastoral transhumance and nomadic area in Abalak (zone 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low availability of pastures between June and September • Increased food prices • Low local demand and exportation of livestock • Disruption to the agropastoral growing season 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor physical condition of livestock • Decreased prices for livestock • Decreased production and availability of milk • Reduced incomes and purchasing power for livestock farmers

ABOUT SCENARIO DEVELOPMENT

To project food security outcomes, FEWS NET develops a set of assumptions about likely events, their effects, and the probable responses of various actors. FEWS NET analyzes these assumptions in the context of current conditions and local livelihoods to arrive at a most likely scenario for the coming eight months. [Learn more here.](#)