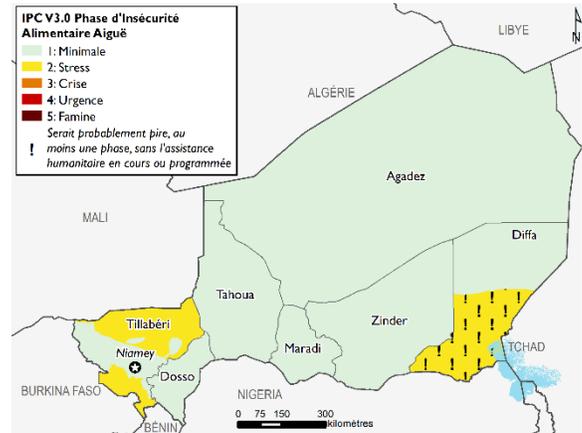


*Food security conditions remain generally favorable except in conflict areas*

**KEY MESSAGES**

- Throughout most agricultural and agropastoral areas, agricultural production is good and has resulted in high levels of stocks of households' main food sources. In localized areas with agricultural production deficits, poor households are managing to meet their food and non-food needs, but only by using strategies that put pressure on livelihoods, placing them in Stressed food insecurity (IPC Phase 2).
- Livestock are benefiting from good availability of fodder and are currently in good physical condition, which is conducive to improved market value and adequate food access for households. However, the low nutritional value of the fodder available in some pockets in Diffa is leaving their livestock in poor condition and fueling low prices, requiring households to sell more livestock than normal to obtain sufficient food.
- In the northern areas of the Tillabéri region, insecurity and the cereal deficit are disrupting markets and cereal flows, and also restricting access to livelihoods. Food security for the majority of households is Stressed (IPC Phase 2) and may reach Crisis (IPC Phase 3) due to increasing security measures, which are limiting households' access to resources and limiting humanitarian access.
- In the Diffa region, households affected by the ongoing conflict continue to depend on the food assistance provided. This is enabling most households to meet their food needs and remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2) throughout February 2019 and in the coming months.

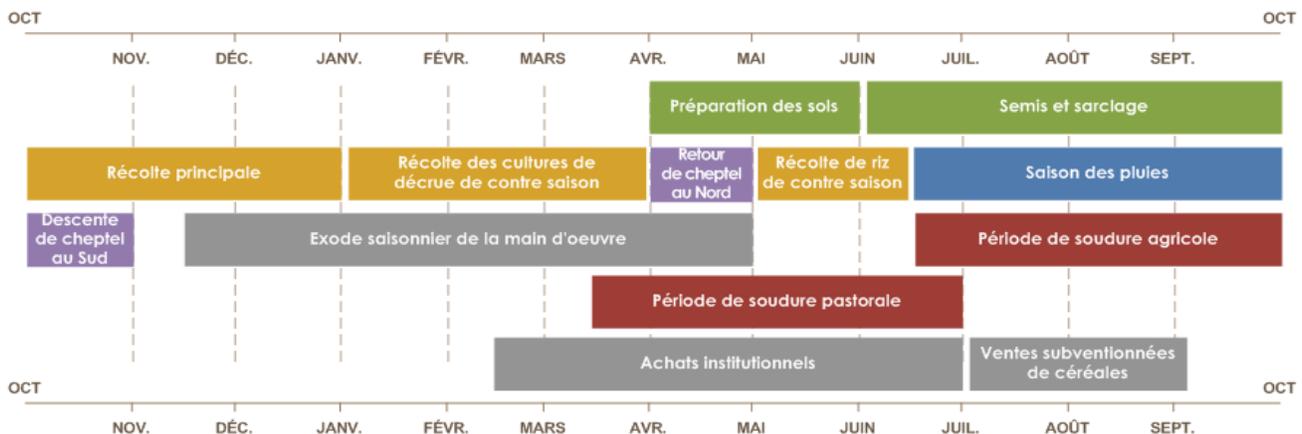
Food Security Outlook, February 2019



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

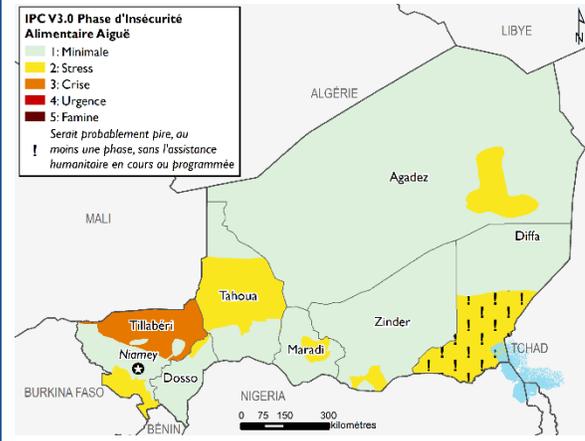
Rainfall through September/October allowed crops to complete their growth cycle normally throughout most of the country. Provisional estimates by the Agricultural Statistics Office put cereal production at around 6 million tons, which is an increase of more than 10 percent compared with the five-year average (Figure 1). If stock reserves, imports and food aid are added to this national production, there is a cereal surplus of almost 700,000 tons, or apparent availability of 268 kg per person per year, compared with an average need of 231 kg per person per year.

However, climatic constraints such as excess moisture on crops sown late have impacted agricultural production in some agricultural and agropastoral areas in Magaria and Tesker (Zinder region), Mayahi and Bermo (Maradi region), Abalak, Bouza, Tchintabaraden and Tilia (Tahoua region), Torodi, Ouallam and Ayorou (Tillabéri region).

Good fodder production has also been recorded, with an estimated surplus of over 3 million tons of dry matter, equivalent to 113 percent of the fodder needs estimated by the Department of Agricultural Development. Livestock movements are currently normal and the main watering holes are sufficiently full. However, poor-quality fodder has been reported in some parts of the pastoral area, particularly in the pastoral band of the Diffa region, where poor pasture quality has already caused the physical condition of livestock to deteriorate.

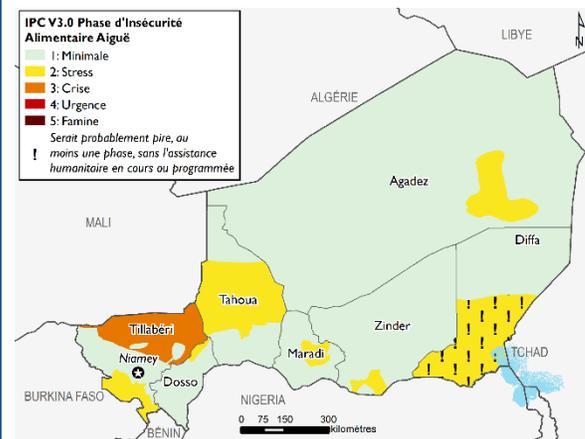
As regards markets, food conditions and supplies are satisfactory, thanks to the end of new harvests and ongoing sales. However, according to the results of the recent joint market assessment carried out by the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), FEWS NET, the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Markets Information System (SIM), the supply of cereals is limited compared with last year and the five-year average, due to low local, commercial and institutional demand. Prices for cereals and cash crops are showing an overall downward trend. The export of cowpeas and livestock to Nigeria, which represents the largest economic opportunity for Niger’s markets, are being negatively affected by the situation in Nigeria and the country’s dominating presidential and legislative elections. This is translating into lower prices for cowpeas and livestock, at a time when producers and livestock farmers need to sell their products to rebuild their grain stocks (Figures 2 and 3).

Projected food security outcomes, February to May 2019



Source: FEWS NET

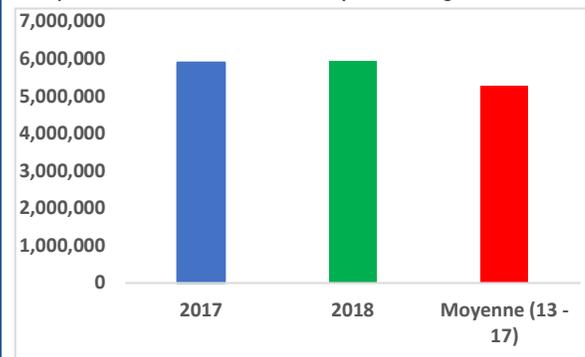
Projected food security outcomes, June to September 2019



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.

Figure 1. Cereal production (per metric ton) in 2018, compared with 2017 and the five-year average



Source: DS/MAG/IEI

The provisional results of the nutrition survey conducted in October 2018 estimated the national prevalence of global acute malnutrition among children aged 6–59 months at 15 percent (95 percent CI: 13.6–16.6) according to the weight-for-height index expressed as a z-score of < -2 and/or edema. Regions with prevalence above the national average are: Maradi (15.7 percent, 95 percent CI: 12.0–19.9), Maradi (16.7 percent, 95 percent CI: 11.8–20.5), Tahoua (16.4 percent, 95 percent CI: 13.3–20.2) and Zinder (19.2 percent, 95 percent CI: 16.2–22.6). With relatively stable food insecurity and morbidity, the nutritional situation is similar to the seasonal average.

Due to good agricultural and pastoral conditions and good water supplies for dry season agricultural production, households’ livelihoods and main sources of income are based on agricultural, animal, forest and horticultural products. Households are exerting a normal amount of pressure on these livelihoods to access food supplies, thanks to favorable terms of trade. Poor households are selling straw and wood at average prices, with market gardening labor providing an estimated income of XOF 1,500 to 2,000 per day, which is similar to the average.

Security crises are ongoing, with terrorist actions of armed groups in the border countries of Nigeria, Mali and Burkina Faso resulting in attacks and intercommunity conflicts in the Diffa, Tillabéri and Tahoua regions. These continuing security pressures, and the security measures in place, are causing the deterioration of markets and livelihoods, as well as population displacements, with an estimated 250,000 people displaced in the Diffa region and 150,000 people in the Tillabéri and Tahoua regions, according to assessments carried out by United Nations organizations.

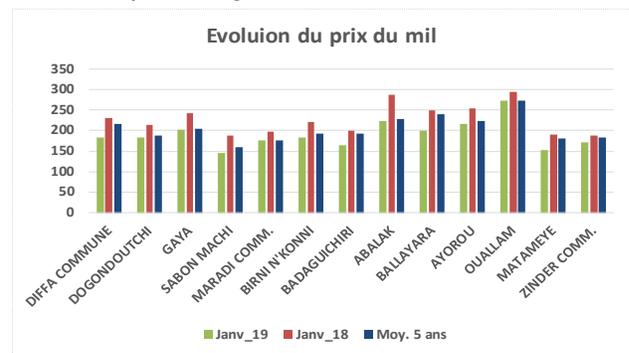
Overall, food security is considered Minimal (IPC Phase 1), but the situation is worse in areas experiencing conflicts with armed groups and intercommunity tensions, which are hampering food security and household livelihoods.

**Assumptions**

The most likely food security situation for February to September 2019 is based on the following underlying assumptions regarding the trends in nationwide conditions:

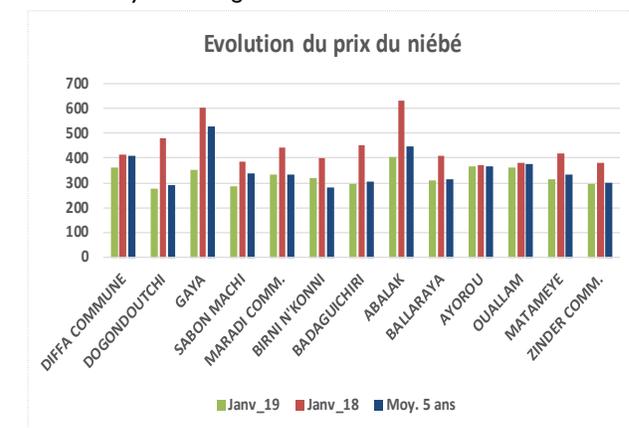
- The results of the preliminary forecast analyses indicate a normal start to the next rainy season in May/June 2019, with average cumulative rainfall.
- Thanks to good water availability and support from the Government and its partners, dry season agricultural production will be normal from February to April/May 2019 with average output expected, which will contribute to household income and food diversification.
- Cereal stocks from the 2018/19 agricultural harvests will allow agricultural and agropastoral households to consume and meet their food needs for a period similar to usual, except in areas of deficit, where a significant decline in cereal reserves will be observed as normal.
- Cereals imports from Nigeria, Benin, Burkina Faso and Mali will continue, which will help maintain adequate market supplies in almost every part of the country. The supply of cereals on the markets will be sufficient between February

**Figure 2.** Millet prices in January 2019, compared with 2018 and the five-year average



Source: Agricultural Market Information System (SIMA)

**Figure 3.** Cowpea prices in January 2019, compared with 2018 and the five-year average

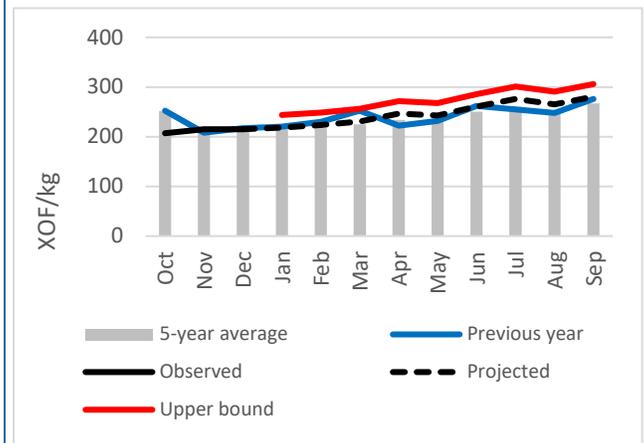


Source: Agricultural Market Information System (SIMA)

and September 2019, but will be constrained by insecurity in Nigeria, Mali and Burkina Faso, which will disrupt flows of cereal imports, especially in the Diffa, Tillabéri and Tahoua regions.

- The supply of livestock and market garden crops will follow the normal trend from February to September 2019 thanks to a favorable food situation.
- Demand for cereals and horticultural products will follow its normal seasonal pattern in February to September 2019.
- Demand for livestock and cash crops will be affected by the adverse situation created by armed and intercommunity conflicts, which are disrupting flows and limiting the presence of and procurement by exporting traders.
- Overall, cereal prices on markets will be lower than in 2018/19 and similar to the five-year average. However, in some areas, including those affected by armed conflict, above-average prices will be observed from April to September 2019.
- Labor migration will take place as normal and workers will return in April/May 2019 with average incomes, due to stable sociopolitical situations in the host countries that offer migrants employment opportunities.
- Household incomes will be average and generated from the sale of market gardening labor, straw and wood from February to April 2019, the sale of agricultural labor for the winter season in mid-September, and the sale of livestock for Ramadan and Tabaski festivals in June/July and August/September.
- The nutritional situation is expected to develop more or less in line with the seasonal average, with periodic deterioration related to diseases such as meningitis and cholera from February to April/May and malaria from June/July to September, as well as the food situation toward the beginning of the lean season from March to June (pastoral areas) and June to September (agricultural areas).
- The security situation in the country is expected to deteriorate, particularly in the Diffa, Tillabéri and Tahoua regions, where an increase in the number of displaced persons may be observed from February to September 2019.
- Flooding will occur in July and August, which will impact the livelihoods of populations in river valleys.

**Figure 4.** Projected price (XOF/kg) of millet on the Diffa market



Source: FEWS NET

*Most likely food security outcomes*

Overall, food security conditions indicate that accessing food will have limited pressure on livelihoods from February to May 2019. However, this is expected to change from June to September 2019, when strategies that pressurize livelihoods will be needed to meet food consumption needs. This implies that Minimal overall food insecurity (IPC Phase 1) from February to May will become Stressed (IPC Phase 2) from June to September in Ouallam, Torodi, Abalak, Tchintabaraden, Mayahi, Magaria, Dougass, Ngourty, Nguigmi and Bilma. There will, however, be areas where some populations have Crisis or Stressed food security (IPC Phases 2 and 3) from February to May and more so from June to September 2019, due to the ongoing insecurity crises.

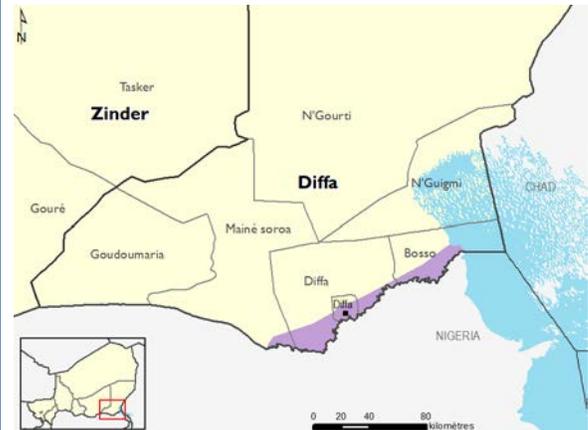
**AREAS OF CONCERN**

**Pepper-growing area in Komadougou, Diffa**

*Current situation*

This area is characterized by the irrigated production of red peppers, known as “red gold” due to their high market value. The site sits on the north bank of the Komadougou River, which runs approximately 160 kilometers along the southeast border with Nigeria and flows into Lake Chad. Markets across the Nigerian border, where the peppers are sold dried, particularly add to their value, although they are also sold in the west to the rest of Niger. Flood recession crops are also grown in this area. Rice is a second irrigated crop and there is also some market gardening (tomatoes, cabbages, okra, chillies and other vegetables). Fishing is a minor seasonal activity. Livestock farming is the second-largest economic sector in this area. The livestock bred in the area are mainly large mammals (bovines) and small mammals such as goats and sheep. Poultry is also bred in this area.

**Figure 5.** Pepper-growing area in Komadougou, Diffa



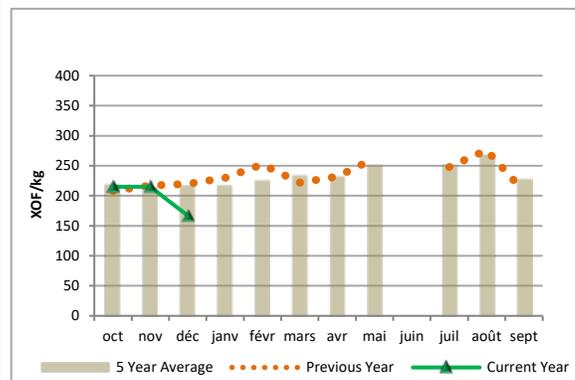
Source: FEWS NET

Insecurity in the area has taken the form of threats of incursions and extortion of property, actual incursions into villages by armed persons and kidnapping. Attacks and threats of attacks and kidnapping have caused new internal displacements of populations, with people leaving their villages or sites to settle in sites occupied by former internally displaced persons (IDPs). These new displacements observed in December 2018 and January 2019 involve several hundred households comprising thousands of people, including men, women and children, according to assessments conducted by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) in December 2018 and January 2019 at sites in the rural communes of Gueskerou and Chetimari.

Movement between sites increased to 512 households with 2,812 people (500 men, 1,056 women, 976 girls and 566 boys) in December 2018, compared with 436 households with 1,718 people in November 2018, according to a joint protection monitoring mission carried out by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHRC) in December 2018. These movements are due to violence acts from members of non-State armed groups. These new IDPs are in addition to over 100,000 earlier internal displacements in several locations.

The main sources of food for households are typically purchases, their own produce and donations/assistance. On average, their own produce comprises no more than 30 to 35 percent of their annual household food, which is equivalent to three or four months of coverage. However, provisional data published by the Agriculture Statistics Office indicates that there is an agricultural production deficit due to climate events (drought) and pest attacks, which has resulted in households reserving only a low level of stocks that cover one month’s consumption maximum. In fact, according to rapid assessments carried out by IRC at IDP sites in the communes of Gueskerou and Chetimari in late December 2018 and early January 2019, the stock available for all households covers no more than one to two weeks.

**Figure 6.** Nominal maize prices on the Diffa assembly markets



Source: FEWS NET

Purchases and food aid provide the main sources of food for households. Market availability is sufficient and millet purchase prices are favorable compared with the five-year average, but household purchasing power is affected by declining farm labor wages and migrant remittances. According to the multi-sectoral evaluation report conducted by IRC from 11–12 December 2018 at the Garinwanzam Foulatéri IDP site in the rural commune of Gueskerou, Diffa, the main sources of food for these new IDPs are market purchases (60 percent), donations from neighboring families (27 percent), in-kind payments (6 percent) and borrowing (5 percent). The income earned by these populations in the past three months has mainly come from the sale of coal and firewood (48 percent), day labor (46 percent), agricultural production (3 percent) and non-agricultural small-scale trading (2 percent). IRC conducted another assessment at the site in Damaram, in the rural commune of Chetimari from 3–4 January 2019, which indicated that market purchases

comprise the main source of household food (69 percent), with 11 percent of these households depending on donations from neighbors and the community. The main source of household income comes from the sale of coal and firewood (38 percent).

Humanitarian assistance continues to be provided by 30 to 40 humanitarian actors, according to information provided by partners and consolidated by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in January 2019, mapping the operational presence of humanitarian actors in the Diffa region. Food, nutrition, health, hygiene and sanitation, protection and shelter are provided as assistance. To promote community solidarity, such assistance is provided to former refugees, returnees and IDPs that now host newly displaced persons, who indirectly benefit from the assistance. Although peppers are the main source of income in a typical year, the reduction of cultivation areas due to restrictive security measures following security issues has caused the exchange of in-kind payments for poor households' labor to sharply decline. Household income sources mainly comprise coal and firewood sales for 43 percent of households and day labor for 48 percent of households, according to rapid assessments conducted in December 2018 and January 2019 by IRC at IDP sites. However, strong competition is causing prices to decline, thus lowering sales revenues.

According to the weight-for-height index expressed as a z-score of  $< -2$  and/or edema, the results of the Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions (SMART) survey using data from October 2018 on global acute malnutrition in children aged 6–59 months indicate a prevalence of 20.7 percent (95 percent CI: 16.0–26.2 percent) in the department of Maine Soroa, 16.6 percent (95 percent CI: 13.1–20.7 percent) in the department of Ngourty, 12.6 percent (95 percent CI: 9.7–16.2 percent) in the department of Diffa, and 10.2 percent (95 percent CI: 7.8–13.2 percent) at IDP sites. At sites hosting new IDPs, 6–16 percent of children were found to be severely malnourished during screening by partners (IRC) in December 2018 and January 2019 as part of rapid assessments of households' food situation.

### *Assumptions*

In addition to the assumptions mentioned earlier, the most likely scenario for food security in this area is based on the following assumptions:

- Poor resident households and even IDPs will have access to cropland for millet, sorghum and cowpeas and, with average rainfall expected, agricultural production may reach the average level.
- Water availability for irrigated crops will be average from March to April 2019.
- The Niger Government, in collaboration with financial and implementation partners, will implement their humanitarian response plan for vulnerable households, including new IDPs. Food and nutrition humanitarian assistance will be provided to vulnerable populations by the Government and its partners, who have already developed their humanitarian response plan to assist more than 400,000 people in the Diffa region, including more than 100,000 IDPs.
- As is the case every year, the area will experience floods in July/August, which will increase populations' vulnerability.
- In terms of security, Boko Haram attacks will continue, keeping the area in a state of emergency, with limited access to livelihoods and markets.
- Population movements will continue but will be small, increasing food needs in the area.
- Access to pepper production sites will remain limited, leading to a decline in production and lower income from sales.
- Demand for labor to cultivate peppers will decrease, causing incomes to drop by more than half the average amount.
- Cereal flows through Niger and livestock flows with Libya and Nigeria will be below average, resulting in higher cereal prices, lower livestock prices and less favorable terms of trade.
- Migration and remittances will decrease as a result of security issues in host countries.

### *Most likely food security outcomes*

Despite sharing food assistance with new IDPs, households of former IDPs and poor households in host communities are managing to access sufficient food through humanitarian assistance, meeting their food needs. Households of new IDPs (around 1,000 people), whose stockpiles are no more than one to two weeks' consumption, are using negative coping strategies, such as reducing the number of meals they consume per day. According to rapid assessments conducted by IRC in December 2018 and January 2019 at sites hosting IDPs, 72–100 percent of these households have poor food consumption

scores. From February to May 2019, consumption of wild and market garden products, and the distribution of planned food aid by the Government and its partners in particular, will allow households to access food to meet their food needs. In many cases, both poor resident households and IDP households have sold their assets to meet food needs, and in some cases, these assets (cropland, pepper production sites, production equipment, among others) have been abandoned in their places of origin. Thanks to assistance, food insecurity will be Stressed (IPC Phase 2).

From June to September 2019, community and humanitarian aid will be distributed and may cover food consumption needs, but there will be limited food diversity. Community and humanitarian aid will be distributed and may cover food consumption needs, but there will be limited food diversity. Food insecurity will therefore remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2).

### **Agropastoral area in Ayorou Department**

#### *Current situation*

The area is characterized by agriculture and livestock farming, as well as other supplementary economic activities. A large proportion of the population performs agricultural activities and is involved in the production of cereals (millet, sorghum and rice) and cash crops (cowpeas, sesame and rice). Most of the cereal production is for households' own consumption, but a proportion is often set aside for sale on the markets. Cash crops (cowpeas, sesame) are sold on the markets and often in villages to earn money.

Milk production is the main livestock activity, with high production periods from October to December for cattle, and from October to February for goats and sheep. Livestock activities also include the purchase of livestock for fattening and breeding. Regular livestock sales also occur in the area, which increase when there is a cereal deficit. Forestry is another activity carried out by populations in this agropastoral area, particularly the collection of leaves and fruit, which are mostly intended for home consumption. Handicrafts are practiced, but are limited to the creation of local items, such as mats and straw panels.

Since 2017, the population of the Tillabéri region bordering Mali has been experiencing the effects of growing conflicts between armed groups and intercommunity conflicts in northern Mali, causing repeated population displacements. At the end of December 2018, the Global Protection Cluster estimated that there were 35,866 IDPs in the most affected communes of Inates, Abala, Anzourou and Ayorou. The commune of Ayorou hosts approximately 15,000 IDPs, mainly from the commune of Inates.

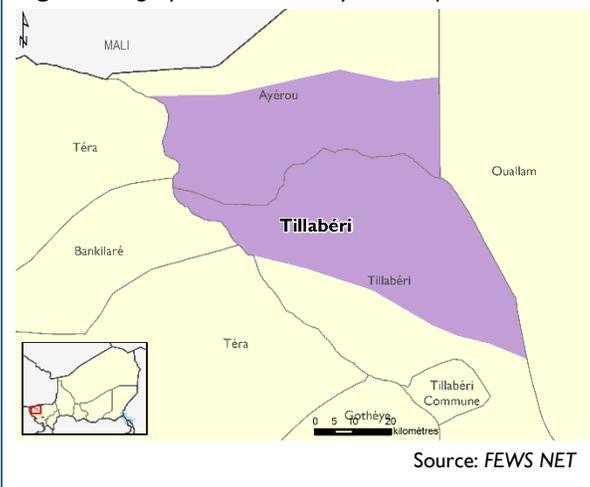
The security measures introduced following the state of emergency declared in June 2016 are still in force in the Tillabéri region. This has had an impact on the protection of IDPs, as well as on the social and economic status of the host and displaced populations. These measures include the prohibition of economic activities suspected of directly or indirectly funding armed groups, the closure of certain commercial routes to Mali, the prohibition of motorcycles in certain areas, and the closure of 16 weekly markets. Military operations have reduced humanitarian access to areas hosting IDPs and have delayed the implementation of scheduled response activities.

Access to food and livelihoods are among the main concerns of IDPs. According to the results of the rapid assessment conducted by DRC in November 2018 in IDP villages within the commune of Inates in Ayorou Department, there has been a complete lack of humanitarian assistance since they arrived to the area five months ago. Their main survival mechanisms are donations (from the host community), gathering of wood to sell at the Ayorou market, and small farm jobs (work in exchange for a few measures of millet).

Overall, the implementation of humanitarian assistance is influenced by:

- the continuing threat that unidentified armed men pose to populations;
- targeted attacks on traders, livestock farmers, traditional leaders and others, which are believed to be targeting populations' property;

**Figure 7.** Agropastoral area in Ayorou Department



- the ongoing fear of inter-ethnic reprisals, following armed clashes in northern Mali involving certain ethnic groups, and mistrust among communities living in the same areas;
- the very limited financial capacity of communes to support populations that are experiencing difficulties;
- the proliferation of illicit weapons and the recurrence of armed banditry;
- insufficient humanitarian assistance in IDP areas.

Income-generating activities are limited because of attacks and threats of attack in the area. In many cases, displaced households are headed by women with children (since the men have died in attacks), and therefore have low productivity. This is compounded by an increase in the poverty rate following the closure of certain markets (linked to the state of emergency) and the cessation of commercial trading with Mali as a result of insecurity and military operations. Sources of income are also being depleted due to recurring theft and looting, especially livestock theft, which is diminishing the livelihoods of populations, mostly livestock farmers.

The results of the SMART survey using data from October 2018 indicate global acute malnutrition is 11.7 percent in the Tillabéri region, according to the weight-for-height index, with severe acute malnutrition estimated at 2.6 percent.

In the DRC rapid assessment, displaced persons reported that they consume one meal per day on average, children included. This situation is not limited to displaced populations and also affects indigenous and/or host populations in the area, due to the sharing of food rations with displaced persons.

Destruction of equipment, looting and livestock thefts have significantly reduced household livelihoods. The introduction of security measures is also reducing the income of small-scale traders and sellers of livestock and other animal and agricultural products. The majority of households in the area therefore faced Crisis food insecurity (IPC Phase 3) in February 2019.

### *Assumptions*

In addition to the assumptions mentioned earlier, the most likely scenario for food security in this area is based on the following assumptions:

- In terms of security, attacks and intercommunity conflicts will continue, keeping the area in a state of emergency, with limited access to livelihoods and markets, which will be poorly supplied.
- Population movements will continue, with an estimated 100,000 people affected by displacement in the region in 2019.
- Demand for agricultural labor will decrease, thus reducing income by more than half of the average amount.
- Cereal and livestock flows will be below average, leading to higher cereal prices, lower livestock prices and less favorable terms of trade.
- The Government and its partners will provide food and nutrition humanitarian assistance to vulnerable populations, but distributed volumes will be lower than the amount needed, due to problems accessing humanitarian assistance.

### *Most likely food security outcomes*

In the DRC rapid assessment, displaced persons reported that they consume one meal per day on average, children included. This situation is not limited to displaced populations and also affects indigenous and/or host populations in the area, due to the sharing of food rations with displaced persons. Destruction of equipment, looting and livestock thefts have significantly reduced household livelihoods. The introduction of security measures is also reducing the income of small-scale traders and sellers of livestock and other animal and agricultural products.

From February to May 2019, consumption of wild produce and, above all, food aid planned by the Government and its partners, will provide households with access to food, though this will be reduced due to the inaccessibility of some populations in less secure areas. Assets of both poor resident households and IDP households will diminish, as a result of theft and looting, but also because of heavy selling to buy products for consumption, the prices of which are rising. Some households in the area will experience Crisis (IPC Phase 3) during this period.

From June to September, community and humanitarian aid will be distributed in safe, accessible areas, meaning displaced households in some areas will not receive aid or will receive limited and irregular aid. Decreases in assets will therefore be significant. Crisis food insecurity (IPC Phase 3) will persist for some households, particularly those in inaccessible parts of the area.

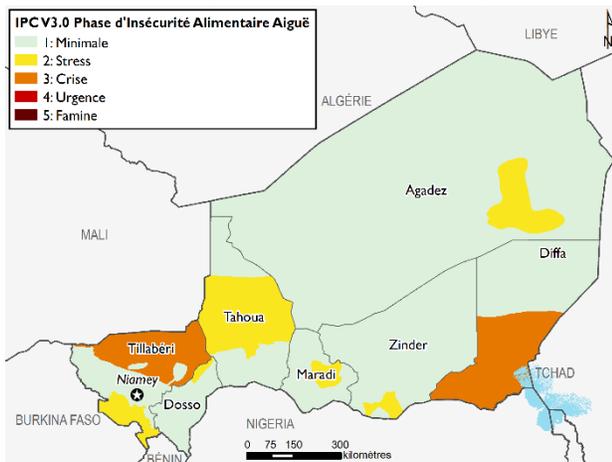
**EVENTS THAT MIGHT CHANGE THE OUTLOOK**

**Table I.** Possible events over the next six months that could change the projected scenario.

Area	Events	Impact on food security conditions
Conflict-affected areas in the west and east of the country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A late start to the agricultural season</li> <li>- Further development of the security crisis and a substantial increase in the number of IDPs and their needs</li> <li>- Increased disruption to the flow of supplies to local markets in Niger and Nigeria</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Significant increase in consumer prices</li> <li>- Decrease in volume of humanitarian aid and poor distribution over time</li> <li>- Increased food access difficulties</li> </ul>

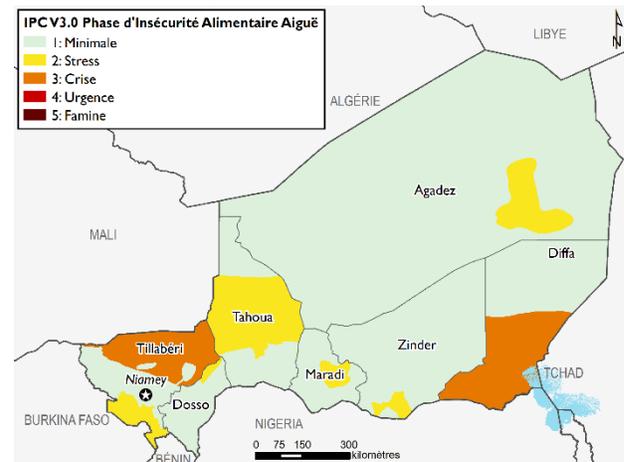
**FOOD SECURITY OUTCOMES, ASSUMING A LACK OF FOOD ASSISTANCE DURING THE PROJECTED PERIOD\***

Projected food security outcomes, February to May 2019



Source: FEWS NET

Projected food security outcomes, June to September 2019



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.

\*Current IPC protocols v3.0 require that a second set of projection maps be created to indicate the most likely food security outcomes in the absence of the anticipated effects of humanitarian food assistance. This protocol is under review and may change.

**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](#).