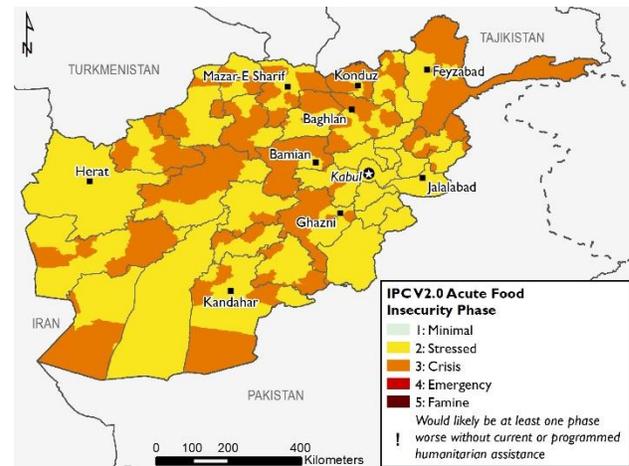


High levels of food assistance needs will persist through at least early 2019

KEY MESSAGES

- Despite improved precipitation late in the season, cumulative rain and snowfall during the October 2017 – May 2018 wet season was well below average in much of the country, except for areas of eastern Afghanistan. Many areas across the north of the country where livelihoods are heavily dependent on rainfed staple production and livestock rearing have experienced significant adverse impacts to typical sources of food and income. Preliminary estimates indicate that the 2018 wheat harvest will be the lowest since at least 2011.
- Insecurity and conflict in various parts of the country have led to the displacement of more than 130,000 people in 2018. Conflict throughout most provinces of the country has also disrupted normal livelihoods patterns and marketing activities in affected areas. Furthermore, more than 7,500 documented and 336,000 undocumented Afghan nationals have returned to the country in 2018 from Iran and Pakistan.

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.

- Poor households dependent on rainfed wheat and on-farm labor in northern, northeastern, and northwestern Afghanistan are expected to experience significant difficulty meeting consumption requirements until next year’s harvest (spring 2019), in the absence of additional food assistance. Most poor households in these areas are likely to face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) during the period, with the worst-affected households experiencing Emergency (IPC Phase 4) with the onset of the winter months in November/December.
- Poor households in the Central Highlands of Afghanistan are also expected to have poor staple harvests this year. Below-average precipitation and high temperatures in June have led to a deterioration in pasture conditions, which are worse than typical for the season, adversely impacting pastoral households in these areas. Furthermore, decreasing remittances from migrant workers in Iran and further weakening of the Iranian rial (IRR) against the afghani (AFN) will lead to a deterioration in purchasing power for households dependent on remittances from Iran in the east-central mountainous agropastoral livelihood zone. Many poor households in the Central Highlands are likely to be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) through at least January 2019.

NATIONAL OVERVIEW

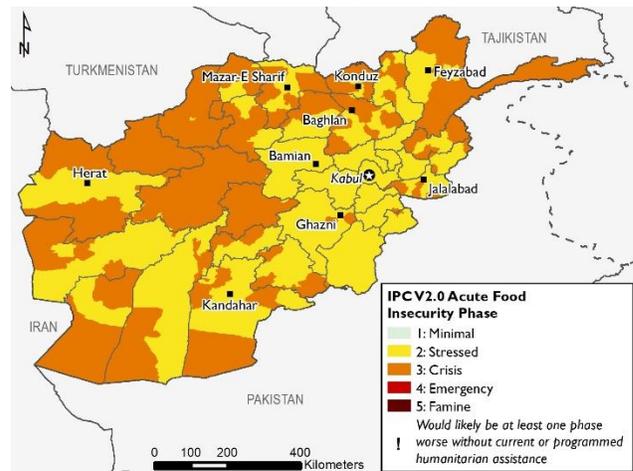
Current Situation

Recent Background

The conflict and security environment in Afghanistan has deteriorated over the course of the last few years, with very high levels of population displacement as well as fatalities due to conflict. The withdrawal of most ISAF forces in 2014 has been followed by a significant increase in conflict-induced displacements in the ensuing years, with more than 1.5 million people displaced by conflict since the beginning of 2015 (Figure 1). Fatalities due to conflict have also been high, especially for people in the Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP), but also for civilians. According to ACLED data, which is only available for Afghanistan since January 2017, nearly 50,000 people were killed in conflict events in 2017, while more than 15,000 more people have died in 2018 through early June. The insecure environment has broad impacts on the ability of Afghans to establish and maintain normal livelihoods, leaving many to adjust frequently to new local realities that alter aspects of daily life such as market access, labor availability, access to grazing lands, and ability to engage in temporary migratory labor, to name a few. Against the backdrop of this environment, available evidence indicates a deterioration in living conditions for many Afghans in recent years. FEWS NET interviews with key informants indicate a reduction in local labor opportunities in many rural and smaller urban areas in recent years, even as daily wages for major urban centers have remained mostly stable according to available data.

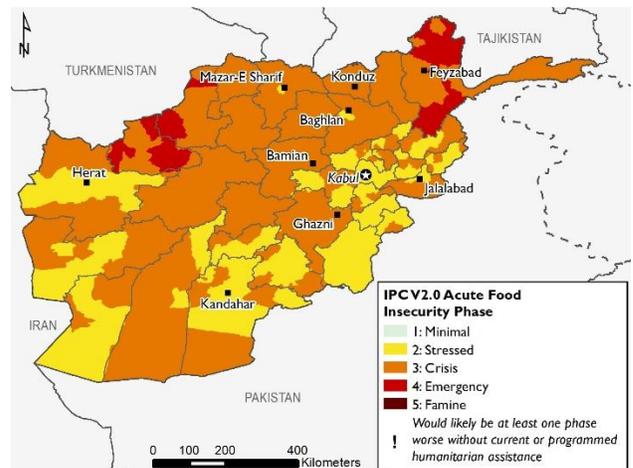
In the spring of 2017, poor distribution of rainfall led to significant reductions in yields for rainfed staple crops, including wheat. According to estimates from the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock (MAIL), aggregate rainfed wheat production in 2017 (588 MT) was just 43 percent of the five-year average for 2012 – 2016 (1,355 MT), the third-worst year in the record of estimates since 2005. Poor 2017 rainfed production significantly reduced an important source of food and income for many poor households in primarily rainfed production areas, compounding the impact of the deteriorating security environment. During the recent 2017/2018 winter and lean season, FEWS NET estimated a greater number of people facing acute food insecurity than at any time since at least the drought of 2011.

Projected food security outcomes, June to September 2018



Source: FEWS NET

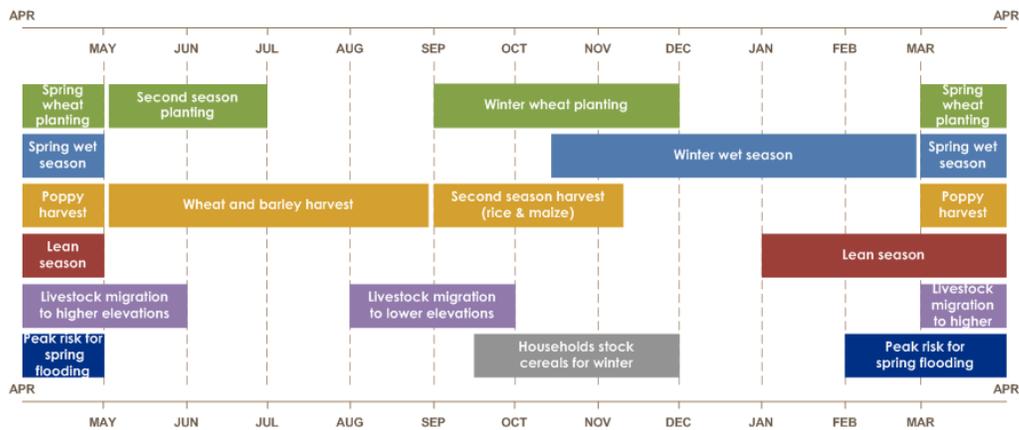
Projected food security outcomes, October 2018 to January 2019



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

2017/2018 Wet Season

Entering the October 2017 – May 2018 rain and snow season, cool sea surface temperatures in the eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean led to La Niña conditions in the atmosphere, which tend to push the jet stream northward over Central Asia and reduce the frequency of storms over Afghanistan, leading to a reduction in precipitation totals and an increased risk for dry spells.

This anticipated weather pattern generally occurred over Afghanistan, particularly through the winter and early spring. Although precipitation improved late in the season, seasonal totals in some areas remained below 50 percent of average according to satellite-based estimates, with extended periods of dryness and drought in much of the northern part of the country, particularly the northwest (Figure 2). Accordingly, peak snow water equivalent in most hydrological basins was well below average. Low total snowpack and above-average spring temperatures have led to early depletion of snowpack in most basins, roughly one month earlier than normal. FEWS NET’s Seasonal Monitor report from June 6, 2018 provides further summary of the 2017/2018 wet season.

2018 Main Season Production

Despite the poor seasonal precipitation totals, snowmelt has contributed to water availability in most irrigated areas. The irrigation water and snowmelt at higher elevations has provided water for intensive agriculture, including horticultural production, winter, and spring grain crops, and for the ongoing second plantings of cash crops such as cotton, grains used for fodder, and secondary grains including maize and rice, especially in the up-stream areas.

Below-average precipitation and extended dry spells led to a reduction in area planted under wheat for the 2017/2018 agricultural year as compared to 2016/2017 for both irrigated and rainfed areas, as well as reduced yields, particularly in rainfed areas. The decrease in planted area on rainfed land is particularly pronounced in northern, northeastern, northwestern, and western Afghanistan, with some reduction also reported in the east. There are also observations and reports indicating reduced planted area for wheat in relatively insecure areas of Afghanistan due to increased poppy cultivation, in line with the trend reported in 2017. Accordingly, aggregate harvests for wheat and other cereals are expected to be below-average. In June, the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock (MAIL) released the preliminary Agriculture Prospect Report (APR) for 2018, which estimates that this year’s wheat production will be approximately 3.25 million metric tons, more than one million metric tons less than last year (Figure 3).

Regional Wheat Supply

Preliminary estimates from MAIL indicate that the deficit in domestic cereal balance (production versus demand) will be approximately 2 – 2.5 million metric tons. This is likely to increase Afghanistan’s demand for imports of wheat and wheat flour from regional suppliers. Early estimates indicate that cereal imports may increase by up to ten percent from last year. However, wheat production in both Kazakhstan and Pakistan is expected to be good this year, facilitating imports to meet domestic demand through normal marketing channels. Afghanistan will also import smaller amounts of wheat from India, Uzbekistan, and others.

Official estimates from Kazakhstan place MY 2018/2019 wheat production at 14 million metric tons, 0.8 MMT less than in marketing year 2017/2018. Kazakhstani wheat exports in marketing year 2018/2019 are forecast at 8.0 million metric tons (USDA/FAS). As of March 2018, Kazakhstan wheat stocks totaled 9.9 million metric tons, two percent higher than wheat stocks on March 1, 2017. Early estimates indicate that Kazakhstan is likely to export approximately 360,000 metric tons of wheat to Afghanistan in 2018.

Total wheat grain production in Pakistan for the 2017/18 marketing year is estimated at 26.3 million metric tons, one percent lower than the record production from the previous year. Pakistan is expected to export 300,000 metric tons of flour (equivalent to 300,000 tons of wheat because of a 100 percent extraction rate) to Afghanistan in MY 2017/18 at market rates, and another 700,000 tons of subsidized wheat exports. Continued improvement in yields points to a near-record 2018/19 rice harvest of 7.4 million metric tons and exports are forecast at 4.0 million metric tons, unchanged from the current marketing year (USDA/FAS).

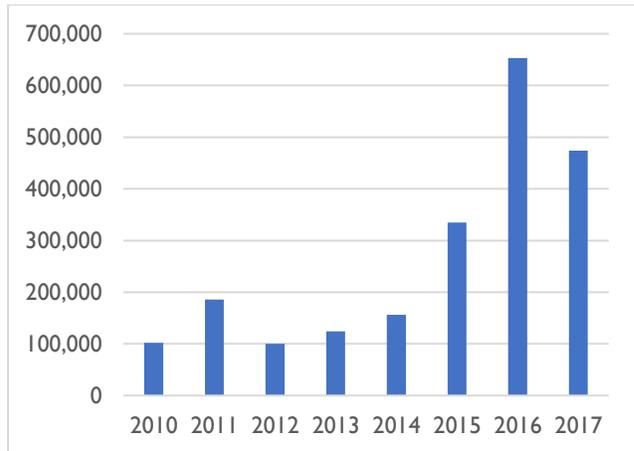
Wheat Prices

Typical marketing channels for importing wheat and wheat flour from Pakistan and Kazakhstan are contributing to price stability in wheat markets, despite the anticipated poor harvests in Afghanistan. May 2018 prices were mostly unchanged from the previous month in major markets. In most markets, prices are slightly below the five-year average for May, as well as prices from last year (**Table 1**).

Almond, Melons, and Watermelons

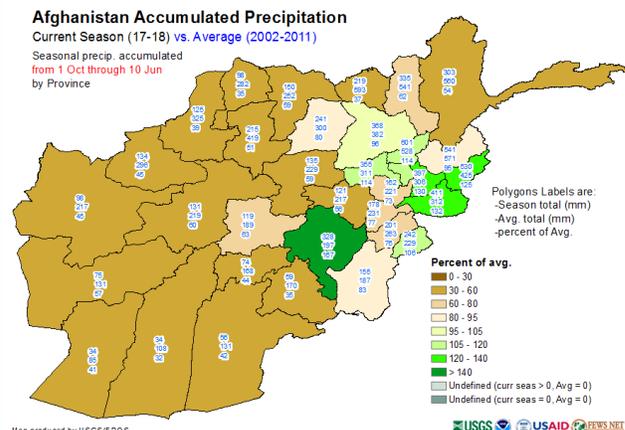
Above-average temperatures throughout the wet season in mid to lower elevation areas prevented frost in most areas with tree crops that had been adversely affected in recent years. This has been particularly beneficial for almond production prospects, which may be as much as 10 to 20 percent better than last year. Almond production is primarily located in northern and northeastern provinces.

Figure 1. New conflict-induced displacement, people per year



Source: Internal Displacement Monitoring Center

Figure 2. Accumulated precipitation, October 1, 2017 to June 10, 2018



Source: USGS/FEWS NET

Melons and watermelons are important cash crops in some parts of Afghanistan, particularly in the northern and

northeastern region. Melon, in some areas, is dried to diversify the winter and lean season diet. Due to the prolonged dry spells and localized droughts, melons and watermelons are badly impacted in all drought affected provinces, and harvests are likely to be well below average. However, in Farah Province of Western region, field reports indicate a significant increase in watermelon production as compared to last year, by as much as 40 percent. In southern provinces, both melon and watermelon crops are reported to be developing well. In some areas, harvesting has already started in June, and will continue through September.

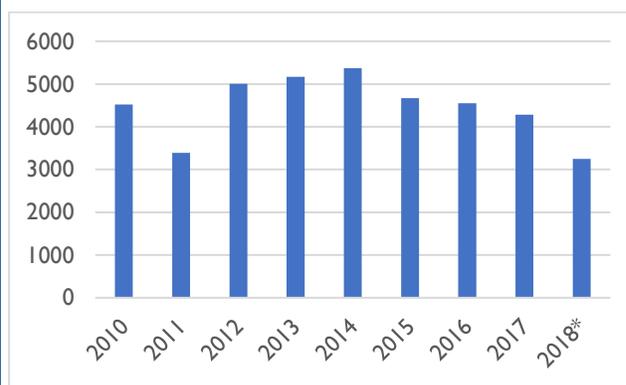
Second-season Crops

In areas where winter wheat or other winter crop harvests are complete, the planting of second crops takes place in June and July. In intensive irrigated areas, second crops such as rice and cotton will be planted on less area than last year and average, due to poor water availability. Early second season crops are becoming established and are currently reported to be in near average condition, except in the conflict-affected areas where farmers were forced to plant later than usual or have not been able to complete the planting process of their second crops, such as in areas of north and northeastern provinces, where some of the farmers in insecure areas were not able to even start planting rice and cotton due to ongoing conflicts.

Labor Markets

Non-agricultural labor wages are mixed in comparison to last year depending on the area. Wages have decreased in some areas, particularly in drought and conflict-affected areas of the southeastern region, where wages have deteriorated by 10 to 15 percent. In the northern region, by contrast, labor wages have increased, while in eastern, northeastern, and western regions, they are similar to the same period of last year. The decreased labor wages in the southeast and other regions are primarily due to lower demand for labor in the construction and other industrial sectors, largely as a result of political instability, reduced private investment, and increasing insecurity. Wage data from major urban markets shows greater stability than indicated by qualitative reports in more rural areas. In major urban centers monitored, May 2018 wages are similar to or above the five-year average, except for in Hirat, where wages are nearly 17 percent below average (Table 2).

Figure 3. Afghanistan wheat production estimates by year (thousands of metric tons)



Source: Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock

*Estimates for 2018 are preliminary

Table 1. Wheat flour prices (AFN/KG)

	May 2018 prices	May 2017 prices	Five-year average (May 2013 - 2017)
Faizabad	28.5	28.25	26.8
Hirat	23	22.5	24.4
Jalalabad	23	25.5	23.5
Kabul	22	24.75	24.3
Kandahar	23	25.75	24.6
Maimana	20	21	24.8
Mazar-i-Sharif	20	22	22.9
Nili	29	30	33.6

Source: WFP

Security and Displacement

The security situation has deteriorated in 2018, with an expansion in the geographic extent of conflict, particularly in the north, northeast, northwest, central, and east. Insecurity continues to disrupt normal livelihoods, both through displacement and by disrupting safe access to normal income opportunities and typical sources of food.

Poor food and nutritional security outcomes are increasingly concentrated in drought and conflict-affected areas, typically affecting poor households, especially those who rely on rainfed agriculture and labor opportunities for income with which to purchase staple foods. Many people who are

displaced from rural conflict areas are farmers, meaning that their crops are often left untended and unharvested. Small livestock, such as sheep and goats, and other household assets are also often left behind. In addition to the immediate impact of displacement and conflict on livelihoods, the associated destruction of property and disruption to normal livelihoods can lead to severe difficulty in meeting basic needs in the medium term. Conflicts often lead to situations that leave communities with destroyed infrastructure, lost assets, and reduced livelihoods options, from which medium-term recovery is often unlikely in the absence of external assistance.

Returnees

According to UNHCR and IOM, an estimated 7,500 documented and 336,000 undocumented people have returned to Afghanistan from Pakistan and Iran during the first half of 2018, with limited options for establishing livelihoods and preparing for the upcoming winter. Many of those returning have lived outside of Afghanistan for many years and even decades and will need support from the government and humanitarian actors both on arrival and as they seek to reintegrate into a country already struggling with widespread conflict and displacement.

Many repatriated households are facing a lack of employment opportunities, shelter, and security, making it difficult to establish livelihoods in their new environment. Many returnees, particularly those who were undocumented, have few assets with which to meet basic needs, and are highly dependent on limited assistance from communities and humanitarian agencies. Furthermore, population movements away from insecure areas to cities and other more secure areas has increased competition for limited employment opportunities.

Remittances

Remittances from Iran remain lower than in recent years, due to economic conditions that have led fewer labor migrants to choose Iran as a destination, and due to new restrictions on Afghan workers established by the Iranian government. Given the limited diversity in household sources of income in areas that have typically received remittances from Iran, it is expected that many households in areas heavily reliant on these remittances are unable to fully replace this source of income with other activities.

Current Food Security Outcomes

In addition to food from own harvests in lower lying areas, poor households are currently relying on income earned from agricultural and non-agricultural labor, as well as remittances from household members abroad or in other areas within Afghanistan. However, these sources of income are mostly below last year and below normal. As a result, most poor households are estimated to be facing Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes, as they forego essential non-food purchases to meet basic food needs.

Table 2. Casual labor wages in major urban centers (AFN/Day)

	May 2018 wages	May 2017 wages	Five-year average (May 2013 - 2017)	Change from five-year average
Faizabad	312.5	337.5	321.5	- 2.8 %
Hirat	250	300	300	-16.7 %
Jalalabad	300	300	268	+11.9%
Kabul	337.5	350	312.5	+8.0%
Kandahar	350	350	335	+4.5%
Maimana	300	287.5	251.5	+19.3%
Mazar-i-Sharif	300	325	287	+4.5%
Nili	350	350	317.5	+10.2%

Source: WFP

In all broad geographic regions of the country, there are households who have suffered major losses of livelihood assets or crops due to drought, conflict, natural disasters, and in some cases pests and diseases. Many of these households are currently facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes. These households include people recently displaced by conflict who are still in the process of recovering livelihoods or establishing new means of obtaining necessary food and income. Areas with the greatest proportion of people estimated to be facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse outcomes include many parts of the north and central highlands that are heavily dependent on rainfed agriculture and livestock grazing, as well as areas that have been heavily affected by ongoing conflict.

Assumptions

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

- The 2018 wheat harvest will leave an estimated 2 – 2.5 million metric ton national deficit, with most crop losses occurring in rainfed areas in the north, central, and western provinces.
- Although domestic production of staples is below-average, particularly in rainfed production areas, average production in Pakistan and Kazakhstan is expected to meet Afghan market demands throughout the outlook period, providing stability to wheat markets in Afghanistan. Prices are likely to remain stable throughout the period, with seasonally normal variations.
- Most grazing pastures in the central highlands and northern Afghanistan did not regenerate as normal, which will likely lead to poor livestock conditions and lower animal prices.
- On-farm labor demand and wages are lower than normal in most parts of the country, especially in the northern, northeastern, and northwestern rainfed wheat growing areas.
- Remittances sent from labor migrants in Persian Gulf countries are expected to remain normal. However, the level of remittances from Iran may decrease from recent years, due to devaluation of the Iranian rial (IRR) against the afghani (AFN) and worsening economic conditions there.
- The potato harvest in the central highlands, particularly in Bamyán Province, is expected to be below last year and the five-year average. This is likely to lead to below-average market availability of domestic potatoes during September – December 2018.
- Staple food prices are expected to remain near-average and mostly similar to last year, and will follow typical seasonal trends, with an increase in prices during the second half of the outlook period (October – January) as household's stock food in preparation for winter.
- Pastoralists' income from livestock sales during Eid ul-Adha (September) and the pre-winter months is expected to be below last year and the average.
- Casual labor opportunities and wages are expected to remain stable, but well below normal due to ongoing economic stagnancy in Afghanistan.
- Production of second crops will be below average in areas that have already harvested winter crops and spring wheat as water availability and soil moisture remain below average. At the same time, in higher elevation areas where the initial wheat harvest has been delayed, many households will not have an opportunity to plant second crops.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

In many areas, primary sources of income and staple food are likely to be worse than during the corresponding period of last year. Agricultural production is likely to be lower in volume than last year, and casual labor wages are the same or lower than last year. As livestock prices are also lower than last year, agro-pastoralists in the region would not be able to source enough food only from livestock sales.

For households that do not grow wheat, do not have access to land, or do not grow enough wheat to stock for the lean season, deteriorated labor to wheat flour terms of trade in many rural areas will further weaken the purchases of necessary stocks during the October to November stocking period. For many households, these purchases will use income from livestock

sales. However, with livestock to wheat terms of trade slightly deteriorated, it will be difficult to purchase and stock the typical amount of wheat and/or wheat flour from this source before the onset of the lean season. As a result, most poor households are likely to have below normal food consumption during the scenario period. Furthermore, dietary diversity will deteriorate seasonally, as access to fresh milk, vegetables, and fruit declines later in the year.

Below-average supply of locally-produced cereals following the completion of the harvest will cause many households to rely more on market purchases of imported wheat and wheat flour. For poor households in much of the country, the level of market dependency for food access is likely to be greater than last year. However, market supply and prices are likely to remain seasonally stable, with normal import flows, particularly for wheat and wheat flour from Kazakhstan and Pakistan.

Food security outcomes are likely to deteriorate significantly over the scenario period in areas where poor rainfall and water availability have led to crop failure and reduced yields, particularly in areas of northern Afghanistan where poor households are heavily dependent on rainfed staple production for food and income. Pastoralists and agro-pastoralists who are partially dependent on livestock for food and income will also experience significant difficulty meeting food needs due to very poor pasture conditions, low selling prices, and loss of livestock.

From June to September, many poor households are expected to remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3), with increasing numbers of people facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes as the wet season and winter begin and households reduce consumption in anticipation of low household stocks during the winter. Households most severely affected by dry conditions, displacement, and insecurity may face Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes during the 2018/2019 winter and lean season.

IDPs and returnees with no or limited access to land for cultivation and who will not have access to food from own harvests, sale of cash crops, or livestock will be primarily dependent on seasonal agricultural labor on the farms of their host communities during the June to September harvest period. From October at least through the end of the scenario period in January 2019, these households are likely to be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) in the absence of assistance.

The drought affected, and poorest households are likely to benefit from ongoing aid agencies' cash or food voucher programs. In additions, some households benefit from the government's new safety net programs.

Planting for winter wheat, mostly on irrigated land, will begin in November. Although improved seeds have been distributed to some farmers through the Provincial offices of the Ministry of Agriculture (PAIL), there remains additional need and demand for improved seeds. Farmers who do not have access to these inputs will either using their own produced seeds from the previous season or will purchase seeds from the local market.

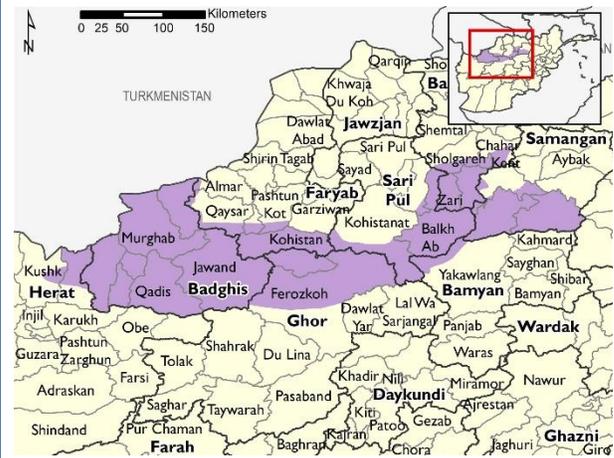
The prevalence of acute malnutrition at the national level is likely to deteriorate over the scenario period, because of seasonal peak of diarrheal diseases from June to September. Furthermore, constant conflict, particularly in western, southern, eastern, northern, and northeastern regions, is also likely to limit access to health and nutritional services and access to agriculture products and food.

AREAS OF CONCERN

Livelihood Zone 20 – Northwest Agro-Pastoral, population approximately 5.5 million people

Current Situation

Figure 4. Reference map for Livelihood Zone 20



Source: FEWS NET

- This zone covers the southern districts of Samangan, Balkh, Sar-i-Pul, and Faryab Provinces, the northern parts of Ghor and Hirat Provinces, and all of Badghis Province. The zone’s landscape is mostly grassland, intermingled agricultural land, wild plants, and pistachio forests to the west. The staple production is on both rainfed and irrigated land. This zone is considered at risk of food insecurity in a bad year, when market access is poor.
- Households have increased their reliance on crop production in the last several years – a shift from former times in which animal husbandry was dominant and complemented with limited crop production. While most households in the zone rely on rainfall, there are some pockets of irrigated fields throughout the zone in which rice is produced.
- Extended dry spells, localized drought, and above average temperatures have negatively impacted rainfed agricultural activities, including wheat production. Most poor households in this zone rely on rainfed agriculture as a primary source of food and income from agricultural labor. Agricultural production is reported to be below production levels of last year, which was already below average.
- Due to below-average precipitation and high temperatures in June in this zone, pasture conditions are worse than last year and worse than normal for the season, adversely impacting pastoral households in these areas.
- Livestock keeping is a key source of income and food for all wealth groups. Vast pasturelands alongside irrigated crops serve this activity well. Most households have sheep and goat. Small stock serves as an important source of food (milk, krut, and sometimes meat) but more importantly a source of cash, through the sale of dairy products, wools, and animals. This year, the availability of drinking water and fodder for the livestock are significantly worse than normal. Field reports indicate that June livestock prices are 30 to 40 percent lower than last year. Many drought-affected households are selling their livestock in unusual high quantities due to the need for cash and due to inability to properly care for the animals.
- Labor wages in both agriculture and other sectors are below last year, due to the general economic environment in the country as well as the poor water availability and dry ground conditions. Although wheat prices are similar to average and last year, the decreased wages and availability of labor have reduced purchasing power for poor households.
- With greater areas outside of government control and general political instability, poppy cultivation in the zone has increased by approximately 10 to 15 percent compared to last year. This has further decreased area planted under wheat. However, the brief poppy harvest generates some local employment opportunities, often paying several times the wage rate of other sectors for a period of roughly two weeks.
- Many poor households affected by drought have lost most or all of their main season harvest, and are facing very limited labor opportunities. Similarly, conditions for livestock are poor, leading many households to sell-off animals at below-average prices. Many of these households are likely facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) acute food insecurity. Similarly, many conflict affected households, particularly those who have lost their houses and key tools or other assets necessary for their livelihoods, are likely facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3).

Assumptions

In addition to the national level assumptions, the most likely scenario for Livelihood Zone 20 is based on the following assumptions:

- On-farm labor demand and wages are expected to remain below normal throughout the summer and autumn months.
- Conflict and displacement in the area will likely be similar or worse than during the first six months of 2018, due to a longer period of mild weather.
- The level and value of remittances from Iran are likely to decrease as compared to recent years, due to the depreciation of the Iranian rial (IRR) against the afghani (AFN), and fewer labor opportunities open to migrants from Afghanistan.
- Harvests for melon, watermelon, almond, and pistachio in the zone are expected to be below last year and the five-year average, particularly the watermelon harvests in Ghor and Badghis Provinces.
- Staple food prices are expected to remain near-average and similar to last year, and will follow typical seasonal trends, with an increase in prices during the second half of the outlook period (October 2018 – January 2019) as households stock food in preparation for winter.
- Pastoralist income from livestock sales during Eid ul-Adha (September) and the pre-winter months is expected to be less than last year and the average.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

Many drought-affected households, particularly those households who lost their rainfed crops, a portion of their livestock and key tools or other assets necessary for their livelihoods, are currently estimated to be facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3). Humanitarian assistance received by some of the affected households should provide for a month or two of food, and it is expected that assistance will continue for a couple of months. Local government and humanitarian partners have pledged to assist in providing animal food for the affected households before the start of winter. Affected households will not be solely relying on assistance. They will cope with lost income in other ways. For example, they are likely to seek more labor opportunities where the grain harvest is being conducted or to work in rice cultivation, increase internal and external labor migration, and reduce expenditures on non-staple food and on non-food purchases.

Food security at household level is likely to improve temporarily during the harvest period. However, poor conditions for staple and orchard crops will negatively impact household sources of food and income. The reduced harvest prospect and poor crop condition will also limit agricultural labor opportunities for poor households regionally.

Poor pasture and livestock body conditions will lead to further decreases in livestock prices, reducing the purchasing power of pastoralists and agro-pastoralists.

Poor households in the Northwest Agro-Pastoral livelihood zone are expected to be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) from June to September. During the October/November household stocking period, many poor households who have had very limited own production and labor income, or who have been heavily affected by conflict, will be unable to stock normally for the winter and lean season. These households are likely to face widening food consumption gaps until spring labor opportunities become available. By December, many will likely be facing Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes.

Northeastern Afghanistan: Kunduz, Takhar, Badakhshan, and Baghlan Provinces (population ~4 million people)

Current Situation

During the current year, 50 – 60 percent of rain-fed crops were affected due to drought and higher than average temperatures, which has had a direct impact on people’s livelihoods. However, so far drought has not been the cause of displacement for residents of this region. Lack of access to affordable food items, loss of livestock, reduction in the scale of irrigated crops, increased prices of food items, lack of employment opportunities, and the rise in the rate of plant diseases are among the acute challenges facing people in the northeastern region. The reduction in the domestic food production compared with last year has increased the demand for imported food items in the market. Prices of food items in the markets of remote and insecure districts of northeastern provinces are 10 – 20 percent higher than the prices of the same items in the major provincial food markets.

Apart from the decrease in the rain-fed wheat cultivation, the impact of lack of irrigation water can also be seen on irrigated yields. Ninety percent of pastures in northeastern region, especially in Kunduz, Takhar, and Baghlan provinces, have been affected, and the livestock are facing severe lack of food in that region. The prices of livestock have dropped by more than 50 percent due to lack of access to adequate fodder. Livestock owners have been selling livestock for record low prices due to the inability to maintain the animals. As such, sheep have been sold for AFN 3,500 in Baghlan and Kunduz provinces, even though the same livestock was sold for AFN 7,500 last year. Lack of adequate livestock food and the 50 percent increase in the price of forage are among the key reasons contributing to the lowering of the prices of livestock. The high price of forage is in part due to the impact of drought on pastures. Although livestock fodder is available in market, because of its high price, the livestock owners cannot afford to buy it.

These issues have seriously undermined the farmers’ agricultural production and economic stability in rural areas, especially in areas that depend on rain-fed crops for subsistence and revenue. As a result, many of the farmers pursue the option of selling their land under mortgage schemes so they can relocate and settle in another place where they can earn a living. Darayam, Orgu, and Kishm Districts of Badakhshan Province are the most severely affected districts due to drought and the ensuing decline in rain-fed agriculture.

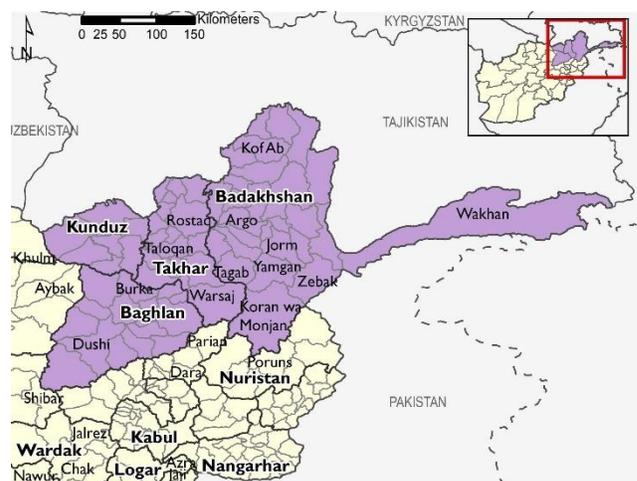
The deterioration of the security situation and the recent drought in many districts of Badakhshan, Kunduz, Takhar, and Baghlan Provinces have brought about a remarkable decline in employment opportunities for people in many parts of these provinces. During nonagricultural seasons, a person can find daily wage jobs only for one or two days during a week in these provinces. During the agricultural season, however, on average a person will have job for one to two months, during which time the highest daily wage amounts to AFN 300, while during the same season last year the daily wage was AFN 400. During nonagricultural season, however, when such labor opportunities decline by 50 percent, the daily wage will be AFN 250 and landing a job on any day during a given week will be a matter of luck.

Deterioration of security in Badakhshan, Kunduz, and Baghlan Provinces is the main cause of decline in the aid provided by humanitarian agencies, and the number of projects has decreased by 50 percent in comparison with last year. Likewise, aid delivery and mobilization of insecure districts and areas has dropped by some 90 percent as they have received no support during the current year due to insecurity.

In addition to the national level assumptions, the most likely scenario for the northeast region is based on the following assumptions:

- On-farm labor demand and wages are expected to remain below normal throughout the summer and autumn months.

Figure 5. Reference map for northeast region



Source: FEWS NET

- Pastoralist income from livestock sales during Eid ul-Adha (September) and the pre-winter months is expected to be less than last year and the average.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

With very poor rainfed staple harvests, reduced yields for irrigated harvests, low livestock prices and atypical livestock sales, and below-average labor availability and wages, most poor households in the northeast are expected to face a significantly greater severity of outcomes than is typical during the 2018/2019 winter and lean season. Options to mitigate the reduction in normal food and income sources are limited, particularly as labor migration to Iran is less feasible and profitable than in recent years, and as security concerns limit the ability for household members to migrate domestically in search of labor opportunities.

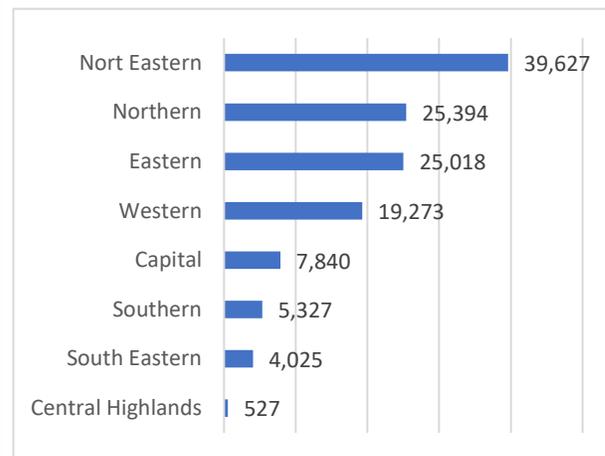
It is expected that the most affected households will begin to face Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes from late October/November, with the greatest proportion of people facing this severity in Darayam, Orgu, and Kishm Districts of Badakhshan Province.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and Natural Disaster-Affected Households

Conflict is likely to continue to displace households in 2018. For 2018 through June 4th, an estimated 127,045 individuals became displaced from their places of origin due to conflict (Figure 6). A total of 29 out of 34 provinces had recorded some level of forced displacement, mainly in northeastern, northern, eastern, and western Afghanistan. There are indications that conflict-related displacements could be greater this year as compared to 2017.

There was ongoing fighting between Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and opposition groups in all three of these regions. Limited humanitarian access delays assessments, thus preventing verification of the full extent of displacement and undermining the provision of assistance and services. Displacement affects all individuals differently with needs, vulnerabilities and protection risks evolving over time due to exhaustion of coping mechanisms and only basic emergency assistance provided following initial displacement. Many of the displaced face inadequate shelter, food insecurity, and insufficient access to sanitation and health facilities.

Figure 6. IDPs in 2018, by region



Source: UNHCR

Levels of displacements due to conflict are assumed to increase from June to September, when conflict typically intensifies. As IDPs are often in unfamiliar environments, many have not established their livelihoods or found new sources of income following displacement. Although some IDPs live in camps, a large number live among host populations either in informal settlements or in the homes of hosting communities.

Newly displaced households are likely to remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) from June to September, as they will depend heavily on humanitarian assistance and on support from host communities. IDP households, especially if they were displaced recently, are at a disadvantage compared to other migrant groups.

During the second half of the scenario period (October 2018 to January 2019), the number of labor opportunities may drop in rural areas after the harvest of the second crop of the current season is completed and winter wheat planting is finished. Competition for urban labor opportunities increases, and IDPs often do not know how to find the opportunities that do exist or lack the more specialized skills for winter labor in urban areas. With limited ability to replace lost sources of income, the newly displaced tend to rely heavily on assistance. They are likely to remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) from October 2018 to January 2019 and will depend heavily on support from host communities and from humanitarian assistance.

EVENTS THAT MIGHT CHANGE THE OUTLOOK

Table 3. Possible events over the next eight months that could change the most-likely scenario.

Area	Event	Impact on food security outcomes
Nationwide	Reduction of conflicts during outlook period.	Reduction in war and insecurity could increase access to health and nutrition services, as well as to food sources over the scenario period. These factors could positively affect the nutrition situation and prevent deterioration of nutritional outcomes.
Nationwide, but particularly urban and remote areas of insecure provinces	Improvement of the security situation could affect typical sources of income and food for poor households.	Considering the ongoing peace efforts and meetings of parties in conflict, there is the possibility for improvement of the security situation, which could have positive impacts on the food security of the poor households.
Nationwide, but particularly eastern, northern and northeastern provinces	Lack of sufficient irrigation water	Inadequate water could put moisture stress on second crops, primarily rice, cotton and maize, resulting in a reduced national cereal harvest and a potentially substantial shock to poor households who rely on second crop production in affected areas. Import needs for rice would increase, which often results in higher prices for net consuming households. This scenario would reduce household purchasing power both by increasing prices for rice and by reducing incomes from labor associated with the second harvest. If the rainfall is very poor, pasture conditions may be affected, adversely impacting livestock body conditions and prices.
Urban Areas	Pakistan and/or Iran forcibly repatriate Afghan refugees	If Iran and/or Pakistan do not forcibly repatriate Afghan refugees, urban food security outcomes would not likely deteriorate further, as labor wages would likely remain stable.
Northern and Northeastern regions	Normal performance of the second season (rainfall from June to January)	If rainfall totals during the coming months are adequate or well distributed, the second season crops, primarily maize and rice, could have better progress than currently expected. Abnormal rainfall could also improve pasture conditions, positively impacting livestock body conditions and bringing improvement to livestock prices.
Eastern and southeastern Afghanistan	Severe summer floods	If the rains from the Indian monsoon unexpectedly increased towards the end of August, then severe floods could occur, likely leading to displacements and damaged or lost crops.
Western Afghanistan and the central highlands	The Iranian Rial (IRR) substantially depreciates against the Afghanistan afghani (AFN)	Remittances and labor income from Iran will proportionally decrease, so households that receive this income will have reduced purchasing power and reduced ability to access food from markets.

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.](#)