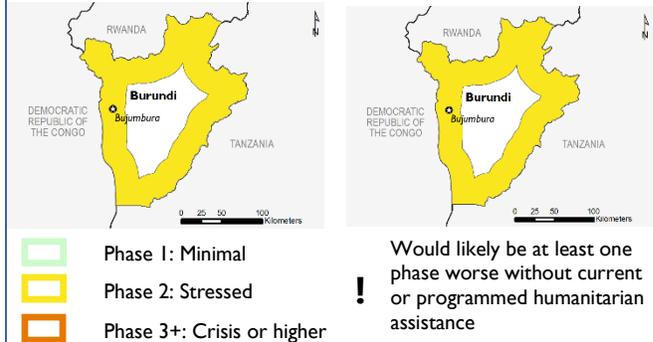


Food availability and access improving with Season B harvests, except in flood-affected areas

KEY MESSAGES

- With the Season B harvest likely to be slightly above average at the national level, food availability is already increasing in many areas. Following consecutive favorable seasons over the past year, food security is improving for many poor households, allowing more to be in None (IPC Phase 1). In the Imbo Plains Livelihood Zone, however, March and April flooding caused significant crop and infrastructure losses and Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes are expected to persist through January 2019. For those most severely affected, particularly the displaced, Crisis (IPC Phase 3) is more likely.
- With the initial June harvests, the prices of staple foods have fallen, remaining lower than last year and about equal to the five-year average. Bean prices have likewise declined, despite expected production shortfalls. Household purchasing power also increased as the Government of Burundi re-opened domestic markets for small ruminants, following a promising vaccination campaign, which no longer prohibits poor households from this income-earning opportunity.
- While there was a temporary increase in displacement from flooding, the total number of IDPs continues to decrease overall, and the flow of returnees from Tanzania strengthens. Many recent IDPs and returnees, as well as the 32,000 Congolese refugees living in camps depend on humanitarian assistance to meet their minimum food needs. As WFP and UNHCR face funding shortfalls, these vulnerable populations are expected to face Crisis (IPC Phases 3) outcomes through January 2019 in the absence of assistance.

Projected food security outcomes, June to September 2018 (left) and October 2018 - January 2019 (right)



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.

FEWS NET Remote Monitoring countries use a colored outline to represent the highest IPC classification in areas of concern.

ZONE

CURRENT ANOMALIES

Flooded lowland and marshland areas in Imbo Plains Livelihood Zone

About 15,000 people affected by flooding in localized areas are in the process of recovering their livelihoods. If they are also receiving Government of Burundi assistance, they are attempting to rebuild their homes as well. Apart from beans, moisture-tolerant crops benefited from the high rainfall amounts. Initial harvests are underway, improving food availability for those that did not lose a large proportion of their crops. However, the casual agricultural labor opportunities are scarce at the start of Season C due to excessive water still in marshlands.

PROJECTED ANOMALIES

In the short-term, it is expected that most poor households in this zone are likely to compensate bean losses with other foods, such as cassava and sweet potatoes, ahead of the Season C harvest. In addition, some may benefit from late-planted crops, which may provide an additional small increase in food availability in July. Since some poor households lost both their homes and most of their crops, they are likely to take advantage of the re-opening of livestock markets by selling a few goats to meet their minimum food needs. For the most vulnerable, however, this is not a possibility as they do not possess any livestock.

PROJECTED OUTLOOK THROUGH JANUARY 2019

According to key informants, the overall 2018 Season B harvest is likely to be average, but price trends suggest a slightly above average harvest; typically, Season B accounts for about 50 percent of annual production. Bean crops were the most negatively affected by more than 145 percent of normal rainfall received between March and May across most areas, while more moisture-tolerant crops, such as maize, sorghum, cassava, and sweet potatoes, performed well. However, in some high bean-producing areas where the soil is not as dense, particularly in Muyinga and Kirundo, beans did very well. Yields for cash crops are expected to be above-average, which will help some poor households who produce them and/or will lead to additional labor opportunities. Outside of the most severely flood-affected areas, seasonal demand for labor has increased with initial June harvests and is expected to continue through September. Current staple food prices are relatively low and nearly equal to the five-year average, improving household purchasing power. According to key informants, June bean prices in Kirundo were approximately 25 percent lower than last year and equal to the last five-year average, despite localized crop losses. Prices have declined further for maize and sweet potatoes due to the initial Season B harvests.

In mid-June, after a four-month closure of small ruminants' markets in five provinces to prevent the spread of the sheep and goat plague, the Government of Burundi reopened them and allowed trade across the country after the reported success of vaccination efforts. The resumed ability to cover necessary market food purchases through livestock sales is expected to be particularly important for poor households who experienced below-average production due to flooding. The recent above-average rainfall has improved pastures, and this outlook is expected to continue through January 2019, which is likely to improve livestock body conditions, conception, and birth rates. This should help offset the loss of approximately 8,500 goats from the sheep and goat plague, which represents less than 0.4 percent of countrywide goat holdings.

There are favorable prospects for continued food availability and access across most of Burundi. Above-average moisture levels are likely to lead to above-average Season C harvests from August to October, particularly in the marshlands. The flood waters are quickly receding, so Season C planting is not likely to be significantly delayed. In addition, the forecast for the September to December rainy season is positive, which is likely to lead to an average 2019 Season A harvest in December 2018 to January 2019. In good seasons, which the country has enjoyed from 2017 Season B onwards, poor households carry over some food stocks. If civil security does not deteriorate, and the Season A forecast holds, then positive prospects for continued food availability and access will likely enable more poor households to improve to None (IPC Phase 1) acute food insecurity through January 2019. The October to December lean season is also likely to be relatively mild.

The combination of improving civil security, food availability, and livelihood opportunities has encouraged many IDPs to return home. The most recent IOM estimate in April noted the total number had fallen to 170,000 from 176,000 in January 2018. The Government of Burundi's and humanitarian organizations' ongoing assistance to rebuilding flood-affected homes should further accelerate returns. The flow of refugees voluntarily returning from Tanzania has increased, reaching about 1,000 per week. Most people are returning to the border provinces of Ruyigi, Rutana, and Makamba, which have generally had several consecutive good seasons, apart from the lowland areas. The one-time, three-month ration of food assistance provided by UNHCR to returnees covers immediate food needs, but most returnees are expected to rely on relatives to support them until they can plant and harvest during the next season. Barring a resurgence of insecurity, which would halt flows, the goal of 72,000 returnees by December 2018 is likely to be reached, as about 30,000 people have already returned. In contrast, the 32,000 Congolese refugees living in camps remain fully dependent on food assistance. The capacity of WFP and UNHCR to continue assisting vulnerable populations is very limited as they continue to experience severe funding gaps.

In conclusion, the area of highest food insecurity is likely to be in the Imbo Plains Livelihood Zone, where Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes are expected to persist through January 2019 due to impacts of flooding on food and income availability. The most affected are likely to face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes, with only some possibly experiencing improvements before with the Season C harvest, though it is expected they constitute less than 20 percent of the population of the Zone. In the absence of assistance, recent returnees and the 32,000 Congolese refugees living in camps would be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3).

ABOUT REMOTE MONITORING

In remote monitoring, a coordinator typically works from a nearby regional office. Relying on partners for data, the coordinator uses scenario development to conduct analysis and produce monthly reports. As less data may be available, remote monitoring reports may have less detail than those from countries with FEWS NET offices. [Learn more here.](#)