

Early start of the lean season in August is causing an expansion of Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes in eastern DRC

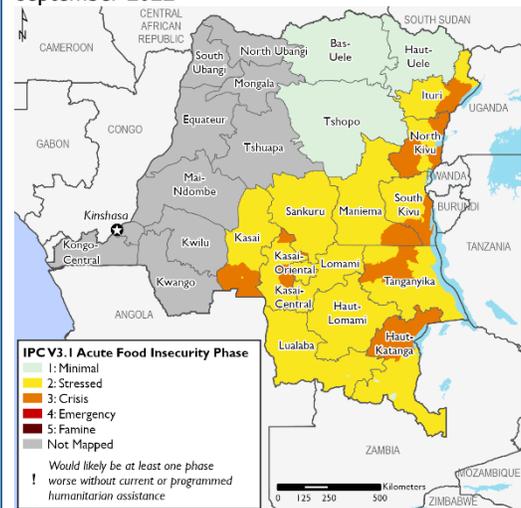
KEY MESSAGES

- Since the beginning of 2022, OCHA estimates that there are approximately 877,000 newly displaced people, 80 percent of whom fled attacks and armed clashes in the eastern provinces, bringing the current number of internally displaced people (IDPs) in the DRC to nearly 4.2 million. These people are cut off from their livelihoods and may be at risk of food insecurity given limited humanitarian assistance coverage.
- As in previous months, prices of staple foods continue to rise with atypical monthly variations of around 10 to 50 percent compared to last year. This will limit food access for poor households during this lean season.
- Regions in eastern DRC, at the start of the lean season and which have continued to experience conflict and high levels of displacement will remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3), while some regions less affected by conflict will experience Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes, particularly during the lean season from October to mid-December. A small portion of poor households that have not had access to land in Djugu will experience significant food consumption deficits and will be in Emergency (IPC Phase 4). Other areas in northern and central eastern parts that are less affected and not experiencing consumption deficits will see Minimal (IPC Phase 1) outcomes.

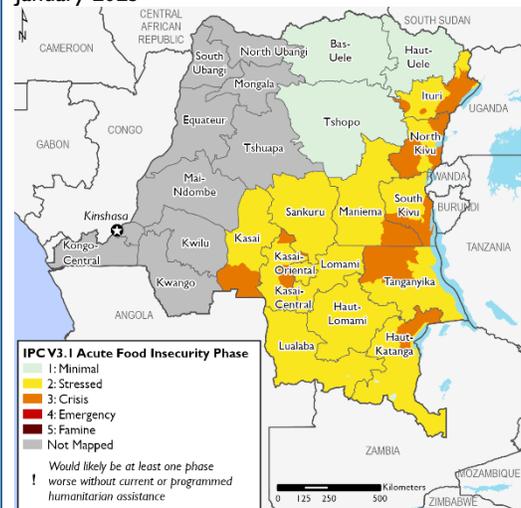
CURRENT SITUATION

Increase in violence that exacerbates population movements in Ituri and North Kivu: Despite the many initiatives to return to peace, violence continues to increase in Ituri and North Kivu, with the highest levels and fatalities since 2019. Since mid-July 2022, attacks by armed groups have increased in Ituri province. In addition, the ADF has increased attacks against populations on the Irumu-Mambasa corridor and there are opposing attacks between CODECO armed groups and Congolese armed groups in the territory of Djugu. These new acts of violence have caused the death of dozens of people and new population movements, in addition to the destruction of crops by the aggressors. More than 10,000 artisanal gold miners and farmers are reduced to inactivity in the territory of Djugu. In addition, several businesses were robbed, and economic operators were stripped of their property by armed men.

Projected food security outcomes, June to September 2022



Projected food security outcomes, October 2022 to January 2023



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 territories of Nyiragongo and Rutshuru in North Kivu experienced new population displacements following renewed clashes in July 2022. According to the Commission Mouvement des Populations, more than 160,000 people were displaced: 64 percent found refuge in collective sites and centers (churches, schools, stadiums, and other collective locales) and the remaining 36 percent with host families.

Macroeconomic situation: According to the price list of the Ministry of Foreign Trade, prices of the main mining export products for the DRC are expected to show an upward trend during the month of August 2022. The prices of mining products, on which the Congolese economy depends, should remain stable (in particular silver and tantalum). Copper, zinc, and tin prices are expected to increase after a significant drop in July 2022. Gold prices could reach their highest level for two months on the international market. During the current month of August, only the price of cobalt is expected to show a downward trend, going from 53,749 USD per ton last week to 49,755 USD this week, a drop in price of 3,994 USD. These prices trend toward [a positive macroeconomic development](#) and the stabilization of the local currency.

Looting and destruction of livestock in the highlands of South Kivu: According to local civil society, approximately 600 cattle and 300 goats were taken by the Imbonerakure and Red Tabara armed groups during violent instances in the highlands of Fizi and Uvira territories at the beginning of August.

Agricultural situation: Given the weak harvests in previous agricultural seasons A and B, the lean season is coming earlier than usual. Stocks from these two seasons each covered an average of two months of consumption throughout the eastern part of the country.

Commodity prices and functioning of markets: Prices of imported commodities such as rice and vegetable oil rose 45 to 105 percent above the two-year average and above last year's prices. Supply disruptions caused by the ongoing Russian-Ukrainian war have also pushed prices up 10 to 20 percent compared to the start of 2022. The upward pressure on commodity prices reported between March and April recovered in June in several markets monitored by FEWSNET following governmental measures, including price fixing of frozen foods and fuel. Nominal prices of locally produced staples such as beans, maize flour, and cassava flour generally increased from the previous month, in line with a typical lean season, but remain well above of their three-year average.

Resurgence of epidemics: According to the Congolese Ministry of Health, from January to mid-June 2022, more than 68,500 suspected cases and 1002 confirmed measles-related deaths have been reported in the DRC. This over 5-month period reflects a higher number of cases across the country than in all of 2021. One hundred fourteen health zones have been declared in a state of epidemic in 24 of the 26 provinces in the country.

UPDATED ASSUMPTIONS

Overall, the current situation has not affected the assumptions made in developing the most likely FEWS NET scenario for February to September 2022. A full review of the scenario is available in the [DRC February to September 2022 Food Security Outlook](#).

Revisions to the assumptions used to develop FEWS NET's most likely scenario have been revised as follows:

- **Conflicts and population movement in Ituri, North Kivu, and South Kivu:** Violence is likely to continue at unusually high levels in Ituri and North Kivu as the M23 continues to attempt to consolidate territorial gains in Rutshuru Territory. Internal displacement is expected to exceed levels seen in 2021.
- In South Kivu, the imminent launch of joint operations with the FARDC against armed groups could increase the level of violence against the population. It is very likely that the number of incidents and associated deaths will increase to high levels and will continue to jeopardize the period of pastoral transhumance in the area.

In the other conflict zones, particularly in the provinces of Tanganyika, Kasai, Kasai-Central, and Maniema, the intensity of inter-community conflicts will remain similar to the last two months and will continue to disrupt the livelihoods of these populations. In addition, since July 2022, with the resurgence of conflict observed between the indigenous Teke and the non-native Yaka, inter-community violence is expected in the territory of Kwamouth in the province of Mai-Ndombe, which could impact the resumption of the agricultural season and disrupt livelihoods for these populations.

- **Food prices and market functioning:** Following the lean season that promises to be early, and taking into account the low availability of cereals expected in the coming months and the continuous increase in the cost of fuel, food prices are expected to remain above average. This is expected in particular for cereals such as wheat, corn flour, and imported rice due to the probable disruption of supplies from producing countries in crisis.

PROJECTED OUTLOOK THROUGH JANUARY 2023

The period from August 2022 to January 2023 will see the peak of the lean season and the start of sowing labor for season A. Green harvests will be expected in December 2022 in the entire eastern part of the DRC, except for the former province of Katanga (unimodal), which will wait three more months for its harvests. The continual conflicts in different areas will limit population movement, particularly for farmers, and hinder the normal crop cycle for the current agricultural season.

The sowing of main food crops will occur between August and September with a normal start of season, although early rainfall has begun before the main sowing period. Food prices will experience seasonal variations, which would reduce food access for affected households. Households will experience some difficulty in accessing food due to the previous below average seasons and above average staple food prices, leading to an early lean season in August. The latter will begin to develop stress and crisis strategies related to food consumption. With the resumption of agricultural work, there will likely be a seasonal drop in food availability and dependence on the market after household stocks have been exhausted will increase.

In the second scenario period, from October 2022 to January 2023, coinciding with the peak of the lean season in November, food access for households will be more difficult given they will have depleted their stocks earlier than usual from the previous season and will depend on market purchases for staple foods. These households in affected areas could develop negative coping strategies through begging and the sale of productive assets to meet their immediate food needs, particularly in Ituri, North Kivu, and South Kivu. With humanitarian assistance coverage far below the need, populations cut off from their means of existence following clashes with armed groups, such as those in certain health areas in the Djugu territory in the province of Ituri, could show significant food consumption deficits. These populations could exhaust their crisis strategies and shift into Emergency (IPC Phase 4) food insecurity outcomes. At the same time, other conflict zones (South Kivu, North Kivu, Tanganyika, Ituri, Kasai, and Kasai Central) with continued food consumption deficits, will remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3). The more stable northern provinces with no consumption deficits will be Stressed (IPC Phase 2) and the northern provinces will see Minimal (IPC Phase 1) outcomes.

ABOUT THIS UPDATE

This report covers current conditions as well as changes to the projected outlook for food insecurity in this country. It updates the FEWS NET's Food Security Outlook, which is published three times per year. Learn more about our work [here](#).