DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO
Food Security Outlook

October 2022 to May 2023

Increasing displacement of populations hinders livelihood access

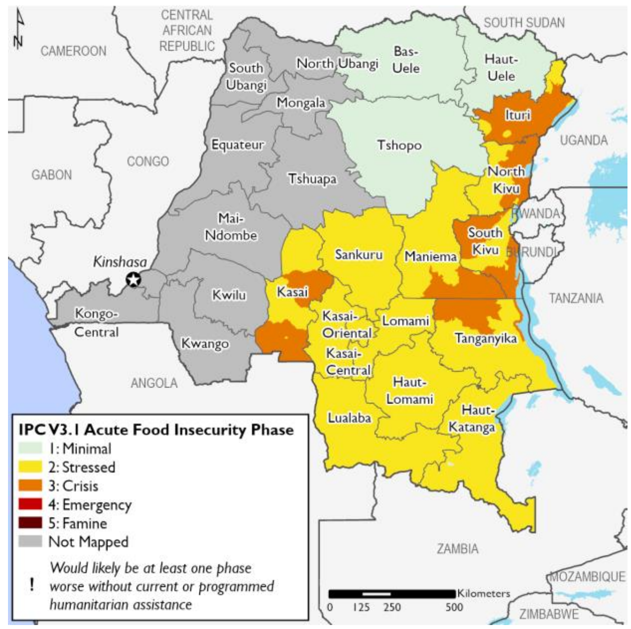
KEY MESSAGES

- The combined effects of insecurity and population movements in the country's northeastern region are limiting household involvement in season A. Additionally, season A is experiencing below-normal participation, suggesting a less successful growing season with below-average harvests expected starting in January.

- Violence is expected to escalate with the announced arrival of troops from East African Community (EAC) countries to reinforce the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC). In addition to the 5.5 million people already displaced in the country's eastern region, increased levels of violence and further displacement of populations from conflict areas is likely. Affected households are likely to abandon their livelihood activities, lose their typical sources of income and food, and have limited participation in future growing seasons.

- Ituri and North Kivu provinces will transition into increasingly higher food consumption deficits as populations face escalating conflict. These provinces will remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) with the possibility of some health areas, such as Rwanguba and Jomba in the territory of Rutshuru, and Drodro and Mangala in the territory of Djugu, having a subset of populations in Emergency (IPC Phase 4). Populations in the stable north-central area remain in Minimal (IPC Phase 1) food insecurity, with Stressed (IPC Phase 2) areas in the east-central area, where households will experience minimally adequate food consumption.

Current food security outcomes, October 2022



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NATIONAL OVERVIEW

Current Situation

The security situation and population movements: In Ituri province, attacks by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) have become widespread in the territories of Irumu and Mambasa, where they are attacking the population and disrupting socio-economic activities. In Djugu and Mahagi, there are opposing attacks by the Cooperative for the Development of the Congo (CODECO) militias against Zaire militias, who are fighting over mining areas and certain economic centers. According to the Commission of Population Movement (CMP), approximately 1.9 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) were recorded in Ituri province alone in September 2022 (Figure 1).

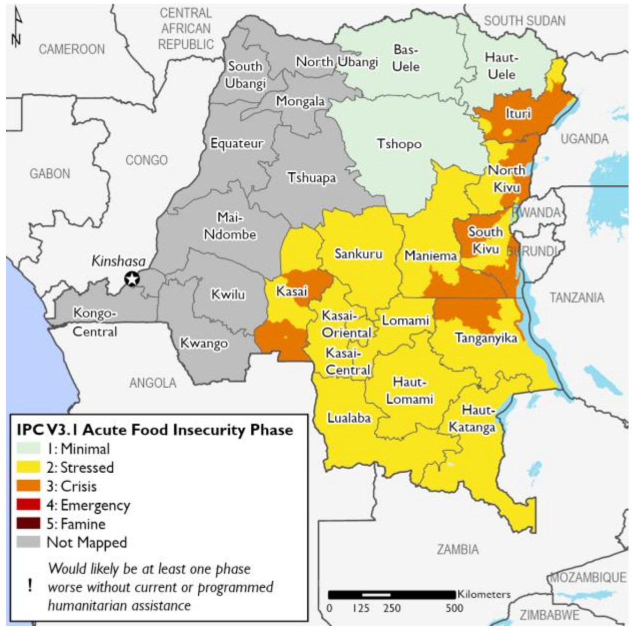
In the neighboring South Kivu province, violence has resumed in the Uvira-Fizi-Mwenga highlands since the official announcement of the arrival of Burundian troops in August 2022 within the framework of pooling East African Community (EAC) forces. These new military activities have led to new displacements of local populations in this agropastoral area during the pastoral transhumance period.

The security environment has improved in Tanganyika province over the past three years, made possible by inter-community reconciliation sessions. However, the security situation remains volatile and inter-community violence continues in some areas, particularly in the territories of Nyunzu, Kalemie, and Kongolo between the Twa and Bantu tribes. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimates that nearly 33,400 people have been newly displaced in this province over the past three months. In addition, as in the past, armed groups attacked during the harvest period, causing huge crop losses for households and a lack of seeds for the next season.

Additionally, the conflict between the Yaka and Teke communities in the Kwamouth territory in Mai-Ndombe province is spreading to neighboring regions to the east. Since July 2022, community violence has broken out in Kwamouth and has spread to the neighboring Kwilu province. This violence has resulted in dozens of deaths and hundreds of burned houses. According to government officials, this conflict has displaced more than 35,000 people within the country. Approximately 1,400 people have also crossed the Congo River to seek refuge in the neighboring Republic of Congo. The areas affected by this violence are Kinshasa's breadbasket for cassava.

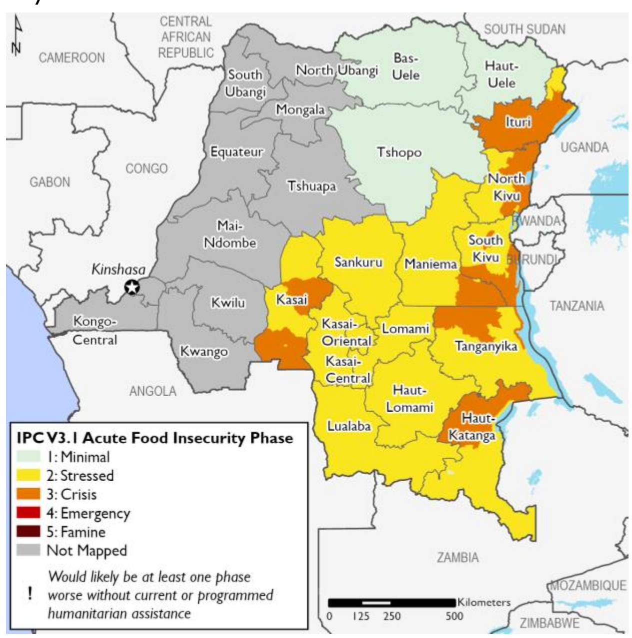
Economic overview: According to the Ministry of Finance, the DRC is experiencing good economic performance. This situation is the result of the surge in international raw material prices. Since February 2022, however, a fuel price readjustment has caused an 18-percent increase. As a result, the national currency has depreciated monthly by about 5 percent since late August 2022. According to the National Institute of Statistics (INS) data, inflation has also increased, with year-on-year inflation reaching 10.3 percent in August 2022. According to the same source, the local currency is depreciating against foreign currencies (1 USD is equivalent to 2,100 CDF) in several markets, particularly in Kinshasa. The official Central Bank rate also increased by 3 percent, from 2,000 CDF to 2,060 CDF/1 USD. This instability of the local currency is also causing price instability, not only for imported products but also for locally produced commodities.

Projected most likely food security outcomes, October 2022 to January 2023



Source: *FEWS NET*

Projected most likely food security outcomes, February to May 2023



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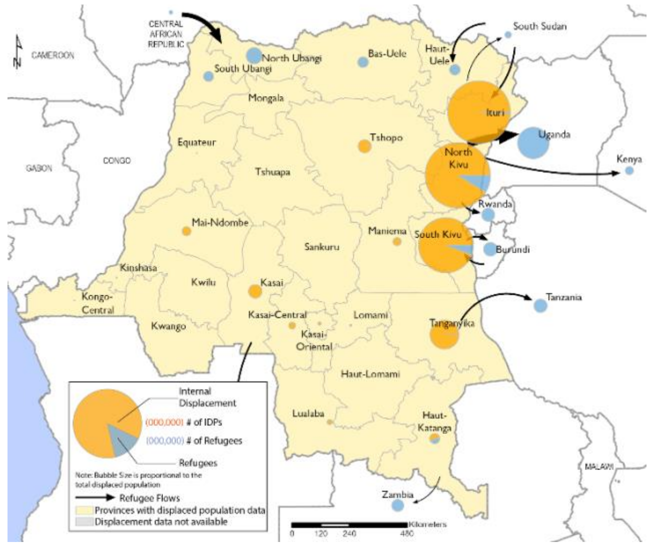
Market operations and food prices: Despite the growing season B post-harvest period ending in July in the central-eastern and northeastern regions, commodity prices have atypically increased due to the early depletion of stocks since August. With continued increases in world commodity and fuel prices, staple food prices remain 8 percent above those from last year and 40 percent above the five-year average. In the unimodal areas of the southeast, which rely heavily on exports, increasing price trends have also been noted. This atypical price increase is due to a combination of stock depletion since June, currently high transportation costs, speculation by traders on some limited imported products, and continued insecurity.

Figure 1. Map of population movements, October 2022



Source: *UNOCHA/UNHCR/FEWS NET*

Fuel prices and transportation: The government's policy of subsidizing petroleum products in the DRC has caused difficulties since the start of the Russo-Ukrainian crisis. The government can no longer pay the larger subsidy to suppliers given high world prices. As a result, petroleum products are experiencing shortages within the country, causing speculation on the costs. This price speculation has significantly reduced transportation flows and driven food prices up, notably reducing poor households' food access.

A resurgence of epidemics: The DRC has faced increasing measles cases in several provinces during 2022. According to the Ministry of Health, more than 68,500 suspected measles cases and 1,002 deaths were reported in several regions between January and mid-June 2022, exceeding the total number of cases recorded in 2021. Additionally, a cholera epidemic has been declared in 13 provinces. This situation has led to increased health expenditures amid declining household incomes and could negatively impact food access for affected households.

Agroclimatic conditions and agricultural production: The growing season started on time in September in the northeast and southeast, with the planting of the main food crops such as maize, groundnuts, and beans. Crop conditions are supported by regular rainfall with no delays. However, there is low participation by households in conflict areas due to a lack of access to their livelihoods as a result of displacement during the growing season.

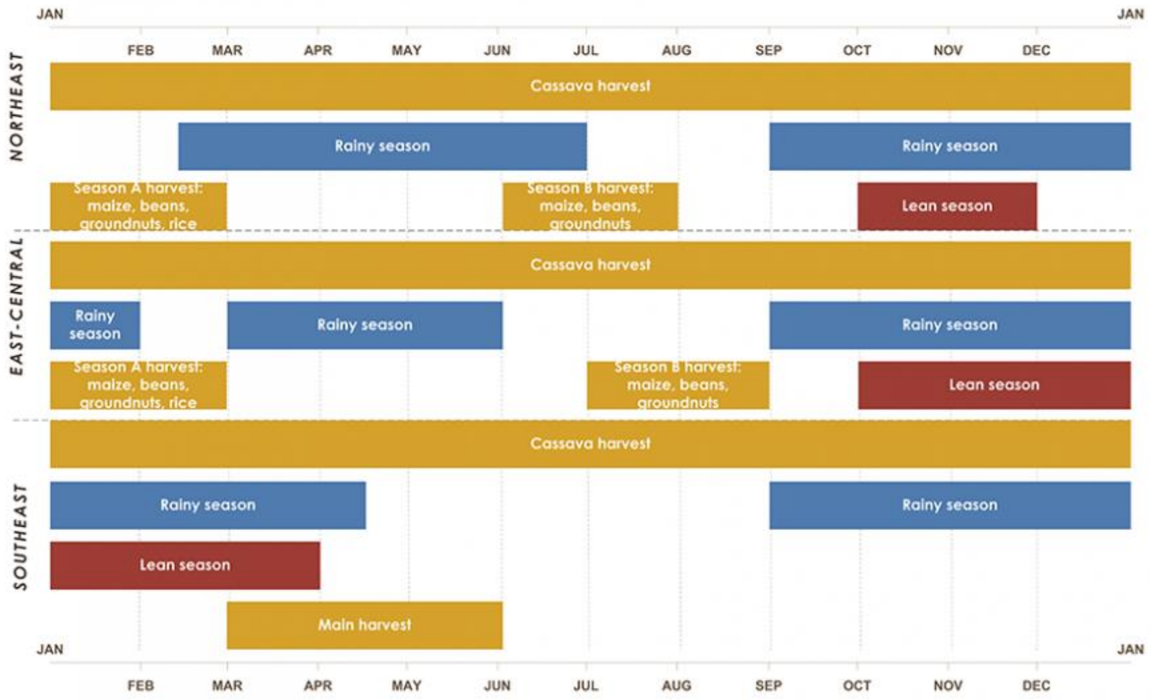
Cross-border flows: After two years of closure, the reopening of the borders with Angola in July 2022 and easing COVID-19 restrictions by border countries should encourage significant flows of imported commodities such as rice and refined vegetable oil. These flows are occur across the DRC's entire southern area, namely Lufu in Bas-Congo, Kamako in Kasaï, and Kahemba in Kwilu.

Humanitarian assistance: According to data from the food security cluster as of September 2022, distributed food assistance has only reached 3.3 million people out of a planned 8.8 million, most of whom are in the eastern and central parts of the country. However, coverage remains above 10 percent of the population in targeted areas.

Current food security outcomes

While the peak of the lean season begins in October, season B stocks have been depleted earlier than normal in July, making food access more difficult for households. This situation is the case in several provinces experiencing conflicts (Ituri, North Kivu, South Kivu, and Tanganyika), as well as in other post-conflict provinces (Kasaï, Kasaï-Central, and Kasaï-Oriental). There have been significant population movements in the Djugu territory in Ituri and Rutshuru in North Kivu, resulting in Crisis (IPC Phase) outcomes due to prolonged food consumption deficits and insufficient humanitarian assistance. FEWS NET expects a small proportion of the population to be in Emergency (IPC Phase 4), primarily in the areas of Mungwalu and Drodro (Ituri) and Rwanguba (North Kivu), with other more stable areas in Stressed (IPC Phase 2) and the northern provinces in Minimal (IPC Phase 1).

SEASONAL CALENDAR FOR A TYPICAL YEAR



Source: *FEWS NET*

Assumptions

The most likely scenario for food security from October 2022 to May 2023 is based on the following fundamental assumptions, in relation to the changing national context:

- Conflicts and population movements in Ituri, North Kivu, and South Kivu: Violence will likely continue at unusually high levels in Ituri and North Kivu as the M23 attempts to consolidate territorial gains in the Rutshuru territory. Internal displacement is expected to exceed levels seen in 2022. The imminent launch of joint FARDC operations with troops from East African countries against armed groups could increase violence against the population.

- In Tanganyika, Kasaï, Kasaï-Central, and Maniema provinces, the intensity of inter-community conflicts will remain similar to levels witnessed in August and September 2022; and will continue to disrupt people's sources of income. In Mai-Ndombe province, continued hostilities would impact the resumption of the growing season and disrupt the livelihoods of affected populations.

- Agroclimatic conditions and agricultural production: Based on the North American Multi-Model Ensemble (NMME) and Southern African Regional Climate Outlook Forum (SARCOF) forecast models and climate modes, average rainfall is most likely between October and December 2022 in the DRC. The same sources report that during the 2022/23 growing season, rains will be late and below average in the unimodal zone of southeastern DRC and may cause a delayed start to planting. However, based on history and the accumulations that the area typically receives, this will have a minor impact on production in the southeast.

- Agricultural production (season A) and food availability: Normal growing seasons could be expected in the central and western parts of the country. In the south and southeast parts of the country, below-normal rainfall will jeopardize unimodal production, and crops expected in March will be below average. Despite rainfall promoting normal crop development in the eastern part of the country, continued insecurity will limit household participation in growing season A due to displacement and low household participation in field activities, resulting in production lower than normal and lower than the previous season.

- National economic situation: With a positive economic outlook observed in the mining sector and the surge in raw material prices, a high-performing mining sector is expected, along with increased needs for mining labor. This performance would improve the income of households living in mining areas.

- Fuel prices and transportation: The government's fuel subsidy will continue to be insufficient amid fuel price increases on the international market. As a result, speculation is expected on the prices of petroleum products, in addition to consequent shortages in the coming months. This would impact transportation costs and, consequently, the cost of food, thus limiting poor households' access to basic foodstuffs.

- The resurgence of epidemics: Given the DRC's environmental sanitation, health environment, and low immunization rates, it is highly likely that measles will spread to several provinces in the country during the projected period. Cholera has become endemic, given poor access to drinking water in several areas of the country. A decline in agricultural participation by epidemic-affected households is expected.

- Market operations and food prices: With the heavy dependence on food imports and the current lean season, during which households will depend primarily on purchases at the markets, the prices of staple foods such as maize flour, beans, and their substitutes, such as rice, may increase. Beginning in December with the expected green harvests, a downward trend may be observed until the end of February, at which time prices will experience seasonal variations between March and May 2023, the agricultural recovery period for the B season. However, prices will remain above average over the projected period. Markets will continue to operate normally except in areas of conflict, where insecurity is disrupting market supply and operations.

- Temporary agricultural work: Based on recent trends in population movements in conflict zones during this agricultural recovery period, displaced poor households in Ituri, North Kivu, and South Kivu provinces will provide a ready labor supply for middle-income and wealthy households, especially during this period. This increased labor supply could lead to declining participation in poor household growing season activities, reducing access to income and food. In other parts of the country, the supply of temporary agricultural work will remain normal.

- Humanitarian assistance: Considering the low mobilization of funds estimated at 10.3 percent of the needs expressed during 2022, this low food assistance coverage is expected to continue during the projection period. According to data from the food security cluster, distributed food assistance reached only 25.9 percent of targeted needs as of September 2022 and remained significantly below 20 percent of the population in targeted areas.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

October 2022 to January 2023: At the peak of the lean season in October and November, when household stocks are low or depleted, households will have difficulty accessing food. As a result, household food consumption will change with this depletion. Food access and household consumption will improve starting in mid-December with the seasonal green harvests and the first harvests of the growing season in January, but not enough to fill household consumption gaps. Some areas, including Ituri, North Kivu, South Kivu, and Tanganyika provinces, may continue to suffer the effects of conflict, with below-average agricultural production and consumption deficits, and may remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3). Households in the Lomami, Sankuru, and Kasaï-Oriental provinces will have minimally adequate food consumption but will not be able to afford certain non-food expenditures and will face Stressed (IPC Phase 2) food insecurity. On the other hand, Haut-Uélé, Bas-Uélé, Tshopo, and part of Maniema provinces, will have minimally adequate food consumption and will remain in Minimal (IPC Phase 1) food insecurity, while the Centre-Sud and southeast, mainly Maniema, South Kivu, and Ex-Katanga, will worsen to Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes.

February to May 2023: The availability of stocks from the season's harvests will be expected in the first two months of the second scenario period. However, these harvests will be below average in the conflict areas as a result of population movements in the conflict areas and in the southeast due to poor rainfall distribution. Therefore, during the short season B lean season in April and May, households will continue to experience food consumption deficits in some areas and may remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3), especially in Ituri, South Kivu, and North Kivu. On the other hand, Lomami, Sankuru, and Kasaï-Oriental provinces, which had an almost normal growing season with stable security and good rainfall, will have minimally adequate consumption and will be facing Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes. Haut-Uélé, Bas-Uélé, Tshopo, and part of Maniema provinces, which have no consumption deficits, will face Minimal (IPC

Phase 1) food insecurity to the extent that households are able to cover their essential food and non-food needs without engaging in atypical or unsustainable strategies to access food and income.

Global acute malnutrition (GAM) changes: The Standardized Monitoring and Assessment for Relief and Transitions (SMART) nutrition surveys conducted in 2022 indicate a concerning nutritional situation. Out of the 18 zones surveyed, five zones (28 percent) had an overall rate of alert malnutrition (GAM greater than 10 percent), and only two zones (11 percent) had an overall rate of acceptable malnutrition. Additionally, these survey results show that security-stable areas are as affected by malnutrition as unstable areas with population displacements and other recent shocks. Therefore, the nutritional situation will remain a concern during the projection period in most of the country's provinces.

Events That Might Change the Outlook

Possible events in the next eight months that could change the most likely scenario.

Area	Event	Impact on food security conditions
National	Further increase in fuel prices	Prices for petroleum products could eventually lead to higher prices for staple foods and reduced imported food access for poor households.
	Major rainfall disruptions in the east and west	Given the gaps in agricultural production that the country has experienced over the years, excess and/or deficient rainfall could impact the next crop cycle during the growing seasons and exacerbate already-precarious agricultural conditions.
Ituri, North Kivu, South Kivu	Total victory of the national army over the armed groups and significant surrender among multiple armed groups	Pooling forces with EAC armies could facilitate the success of the current military operations, help reduce numbers among several armed groups, and promote a massive return of populations to their places of origin. The return of households would promote the resumption of agricultural activities and other livelihoods.
North Kivu and South Kivu	Worsened Ebola epidemic in Uganda	With the Ebola virus declared an epidemic in neighboring Uganda in September 2022, a worsening situation could result in the closure of borders with other countries. In this case, the cross-border flow and the availability of products to markets, as well as household access to these products, could be reduced.

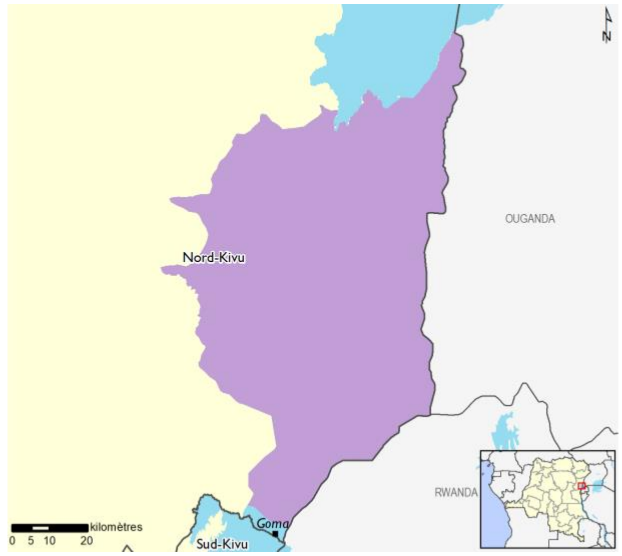
AREAS OF CONCERN

North Kivu/Rutshuru/CD11 (Figure 2)

Current Situation

Conflicts and population movements: For nearly six months, the Rutshuru territory in the province of North Kivu has confronted an increase in security incidents marked by violent clashes between loyalist troops (FARDC) and the March 23 (M23) rebel movement. The latest outbreak of violence in October 2022, exacerbated by FARDC-M23 armed clashes, displaced 40,000 people in the Rutshuru territory (North Kivu). According to OCHA, this is in addition to some 200,000 people who had fled from the armed violence a few days earlier, according to OCHA, bringing the total number of displaced people in the Rutshuru territory to nearly 400,000, including 6,500 refugees in Uganda. These people fleeing violence have no access to their livelihoods and live in a precarious humanitarian situation.

Figure 2. Reference map for the area of concern: Rutshuru territory

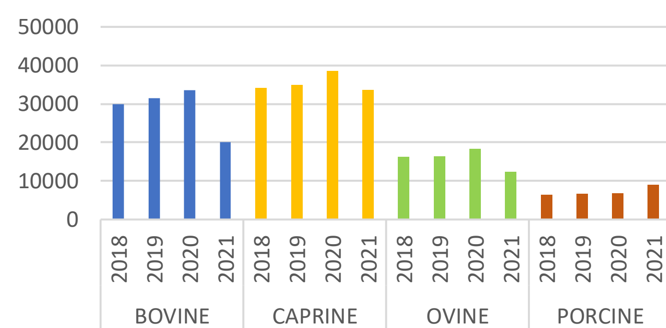


Source: *FEWS NET*

Seasonal progress: Season A agricultural activities have resumed, covering the period from September 2022 to January 2023. The lean season, characterized by households' limited food access, which will peak in November 2022. Farming households have proceeded with the planting of main crops.

This area is conducive to rain-fed agriculture. The main crops grown by all households include beans, maize, coffee, bananas, cassava, potatoes (especially near the Rwandan border), groundnuts, sorghum, fruit, and tea (in the Mweso Valley). The intercropping system is used in most fields with the following main crop combinations: beans and soybeans, beans and maize, and beans and groundnuts. Beans are also grown in combination with coffee, banana, and cassava. However, since the resumption of fighting in March 2022, thousands of households have fled the violence and abandoned their agricultural activities. This area, which used to export its production surpluses, is now in deficit.

Figure 3. Livestock changes – Rutshuru Territory, 2018-2021



Source: *Provincial inspection of agriculture and livestock.*

Recent harvests: Crops from growing season B cover the period from March to June 2022. Normally, poor households farm about 30 acres of land, while the wealthy have access to more than 2 hectares. With displaced persons and returnees in the area, there are conflicts between armed groups, the FARDC, and the presence of the March 23 Movement (M23). The populations of several occupied areas in the eastern part of the territory (Jomba, Rugari, Kisigari, Bukoma, and Binza) have moved to the western part of the territory to seek shelter, even though they had already planted food crops. Overall, the recent season B crops in July were significantly lower than the previous season and the five-year average, resulting in a reduced food supply in the area, which currently relies heavily on humanitarian assistance.

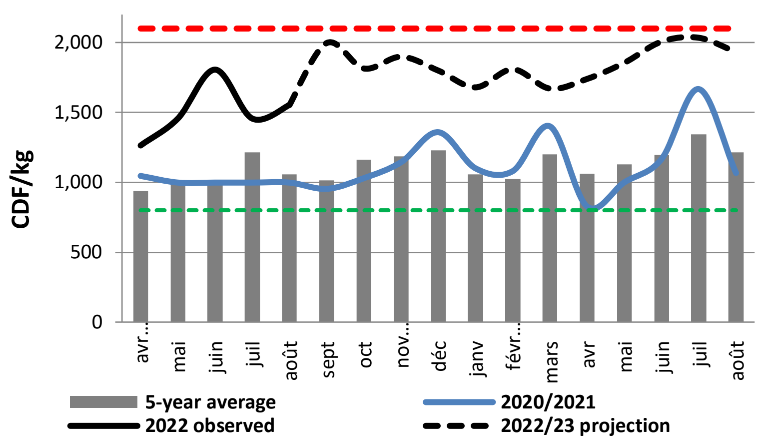
Agroclimatic conditions: According to key informants, excessive rainfall has been observed in the Rutshuru territory since the start of growing season A, which runs from September 2022 to January 2023, with risks of flooding reportedly stemming from this high rainfall, causing significant damage to the crops planted. However, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) forecasts point to a full crop cycle despite below-average rainfall.

Household access to land: In Rutshuru territory, farmers do not have enough land to cultivate because of the difficulties in acquiring it. To date, access to land is on a rental basis from large landowners at a rate of 400 USD per hectare per growing season. Additionally, insecurity in this area limits the movement of populations towards arable land. This land is concentrated in a small radius of about 2 kilometers around villages.

Availability of agricultural labor: Normally, the labor supply and demand are more or less balanced in the Rutshuru territory, and wages are paid mainly in cash (about 2,000 CDF/day). Labor demand for soil preparation and weeding before the harvest is almost twice as high compared to during or after the harvest. Current observations show that labor supply is higher than demand, with the presence of displaced people and returnees who are willing to offer their services for little money. The daily rate is 1,500 CDF/day for a morning's work, compared to 2,500 CDF/day in a normal situation.

Market operations and food prices: The local market in Rutshuru is being disrupted by high demand from the presence of nearly 35,000 displaced and returnee households on the move in the territory, resulting in decreased food availability in the face of growing demand. In addition, trade flows through Bunagana, a town occupied by the M23, are no longer possible since the closure of this border post in the rebel-occupied zone. Products imported from Uganda and Kenya used to pass through this entry point, which is now under rebel occupation. This disruption of local markets is caused by the insecurity-related instability in this territory since the resurgence of the M23 in March 2022. When stocks from Masisi run out, prices for these products — which are higher than the same period last year and the five-year average — may rise further.

Figure 4. Projections for maize flour prices in Goma



Source: *FEWS NET*

Livestock: Although livestock is a minor source of income for poor households in the area, it has been declining since 2021 (Figure 3). As a result, farmers have experienced the loss of livestock, often killed by armed groups. Pastoralists are also limited in their transhumance movements in search of good pastures. Some farmers also engaged in early sales to limit potential losses from rebel attacks.

Humanitarian assistance: Food assistance remains inferior to the needs on the ground. To date, a few ad hoc and unquantified interventions by the government and some politicians have been made to benefit displaced persons and returnees in Rutshuru. These interventions are dispersed and inefficiently coordinated. In its resilience project with the WFP in Rutshuru, the FAO will distribute seeds in Buhumba, Jomba, Rugari, and Nyiragongo to support the people still present in these areas. The WFP provided assistance to the Ntamugenga and Chengerero sites for three months, including two in-kind deliveries and one month of cash-based transfers (CBT). With the worsening of the security situation, population movements continue but humanitarian organizations do not have access to populations in need.

Assumptions

The most likely scenario for food security from October 2022 to May 2023 is based on the following fundamental assumptions, in relation to the changing regional context:

Conflict and population movements: Considering that armed violence will persist in the area and the security situation will not improve despite the ongoing military operations conducted by the FARDC, it is highly likely that the number of displaced persons will increase.

Availability of agricultural and non-agricultural labor: Labor availability will be impacted by displaced people who did not have access to land during the last growing season and refugees expelled from Uganda who returned to the country after having abandoned everything. Many displaced people will be in host areas, and field access will be limited. This limited access to land could lead to increased agricultural labor supply amid declining participation in activities due to the lack of physical access to fields, reducing opportunities for agricultural labor and, consequently, poor households' income.

Agricultural production: Although rainfall is favorable in the territory for the 2022/2033 growing season A, the crop cycle has begun amid renewed hostilities between the M23 rebellion and the FARDC government army supported by the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). Households in this territory, which was once considered the barn of the North Kivu region, are therefore experiencing a significant reduction in their production capacity. This situation suggests a decline in agricultural production and decreased food availability in the area.

Small-scale trade: Given the closure of the Bunagana border and threats to other border crossings, such as Ishasha and Kasindi, by the M23, small-scale border trading activities have been reduced in the Rutshuru territory. As a resukt, thousands of households that used to make a living from informal cross-border trading activities are deeply affected, as are the livelihoods of the most vulnerable households that used to make a living from these activities.

Market operations and food prices: Given the below-average agricultural production that may occur in the Rutshuru Agricultural Volcanic soils (CD11) zone due to the persistent insecurity, massive population displacement, and the closure of the Bunagana border crossing as an import gateway, staple food prices will increase slightly overall throughout the projection period and remain above the five-year average with atypical fluctuations compared to the previous year, despite periods of temporary decline when the first harvests in December will stimulate the market supply (Figure 4).

Humanitarian assistance: According to the food security cluster, food assistance coverage in the Rutshuru territory is around 62.2 percent of those in need of assistance, or about 12.3 percent of the total population. However, the response insufficient, and the population movements continue, increasing the vulnerability of host populations and reducing their coping mechanism. Additionally, humanitarian access will continue to be restricted in some areas due to insecurity or physical constraints, particularly during the rainy season.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

October 2022 to January 2023: With the low household participation in B-season agricultural activities between March and June 2022 due to massive conflict-related displacement, which resulted in significantly below-average agricultural production, food stocks are almost non-existent at the lean season peak in November. The first two months of the period will therefore experience a decline in poor households' food consumption due to the lack of food access because of the loss of purchasing power. Food availability will remain insufficient in the area until the next green harvest in mid-December. Displaced poor households will depend more on humanitarian assistance and the solidarity of host households, living in unprecedented insecurity. With the seasonal harvest, this situation may improve during the last two months of this period (December to January) but will not change the IPC phase. This territory, which has experienced food consumption deficits, will remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3).

February to May 2023: Although below average, seasonal harvests should improve the food consumption of households that have been able to grow crops and will rely primarily on their own production from February to March 2023. Households that did not grow crops due to displacement, and those that lost their crops during displacement, will depend on low-coverage humanitarian assistance and may develop damaging and often irreversible Crisis or Emergency strategies to access food during the short lean season from April to May 2023. Given the land issues raised above in the Rutshuru territory, poor displaced households will continue to experience difficulties accessing land, costing 400 USD per hectare each growing season. They will depend on day labor for the middle class and the wealthy to find an income to meet their immediate needs. This area will remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) with isolated pockets of households that will use negative strategies and may find themselves in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) situations, particularly in the health zones of Rwanguba and Jomba during the short lean season.

Nutritional situation: Historical data also show that the nutritional situation has improved significantly since the last crisis in 2016. Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM), estimated at 13 percent in October 2017 (the period after the previous crisis in 2016), improved significantly over the years until it fell to 4.6 percent in October 2020, during a calm period in the area. This increase clearly shows that the security crisis and population movements are the main determinants of the decline in the nutritional situation in the Rutshuru territory. The current crisis, which has caused population displacement, could impact nutritional status, which could decline significantly.

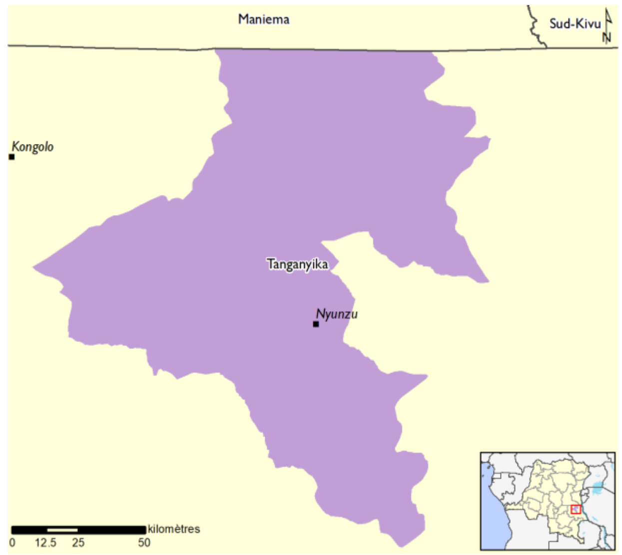
Tanganyika/Nyunzu/CD03 (Figure 5)

Current Situation

At this time of year, facts regarding current food security conditions in the Nyunzu territory are as follows:

Security situation and population movements: The humanitarian situation in Nyunzu remains marked by the crisis related to community conflicts between the Twa and Bantu tribes and related population movements, forcing people to abandon their livelihoods. According to the Commission of Population Movements (CMP), the Nyunzu territory is hosting nearly 106,000 displaced persons (or 27.9 percent of its population) and 57,500 returnees over the past 18 months. On August 17, 2022, approximately 7,000 people were displaced due to attacks by armed groups and returned to their places of origin after two years of refuge in the North Lukuga sector of the Nyunzu territory. This return is motivated by improved security conditions and awareness created by the authorities throughout the Nyunzu territory.

Figure 5. Reference map for the area of concern: Nyunzu territory



Source: *FEWS NET*

According to an interagency assessment conducted by OCHA in August 2022, some displaced persons are housed in sites prepared to receive them in Kilunga, Majengo-Mapya, and Kabeya-Mukena, while others live with host families. These displaced persons' and returnees' movements exert unprecedented demographic pressure on host populations' already limited local resources. In December 2021, a multi-sectoral assessment conducted by REACH estimated that returned households were more likely to have extreme or very extreme needs in the Nyunzu territories (90 percent) than displaced households (73 percent) compared to non-displaced indigenous people (78 percent). This difference is because households returning to their areas after losing their livelihoods sometimes find their shelters occupied. Additionally, some locations, such as Kabeya-Mukena, are experiencing land conflicts due to mining activities (gold, coltan, and cassiterite) which limit land access.

Growing season: The Nyunzu territory is in the CD03 livelihood zone, which is bimodal, with two growing seasons except for rice which is produced in a single season. The 2021/2022 growing season B was disrupted due to irregular rainfall; however, there was an increase of about 14 percent in the area planted and 17 percent in the number of farm households compared to the previous season. This performance follows support from various partners to vulnerable farm households and the World Bank's Great Lakes Integrated Agriculture Development Project for Africa (PICAGL) project in collaboration with the government.

Growing season A started against a backdrop of insufficient inputs, particularly seeds, and amid the return of thousands of people displaced by previous community conflicts. Activities began with planting the main food crops listed above for local households who could access their land. However, there is a delay in the return of the rainy season. The agricultural calendar projects the return of the rains in the second half of August, but as of September 15, they have not yet sufficiently established. Additionally, last year saw the same late return of the rainy season, with irregular distribution over the seasons.

As a reminder, cassava is the staple food for this territory. Maize, groundnuts, rice, cowpeas, and squash follow it. Twenty percent of the maize is consumed fresh, and much of it is sold outside the territory because of the lack of a mill to process it into flour. The agricultural labor force has remained low for more than a decade due to the migration of a large portion of the working population to mining quarries. This situation has worsened since July 2016 due to conflicts between Twa and Bantu, which caused significant population movements.

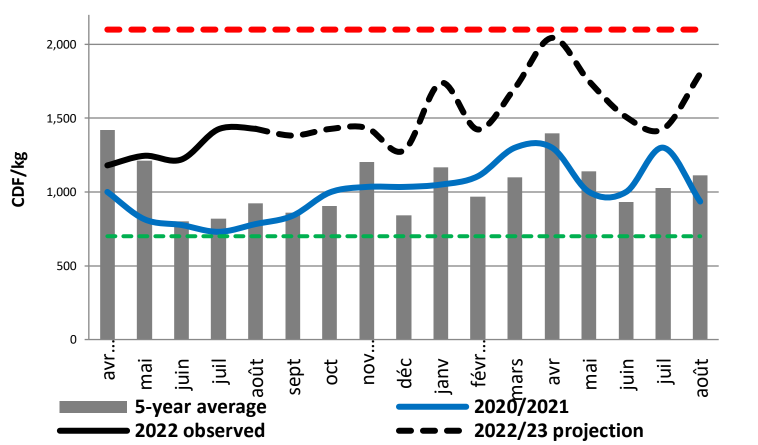
Access to seeds: Due to the low participation in agricultural activities due to repeated population displacement, seeds have become less available in this territory. However, a joint FAO/WFP resilience project plans to distribute seeds and farming tools to 13,527 households in the territory during this growing season. In addition, other humanitarian organizations plan to provide quality seeds to vulnerable households, including Concern (1,380 target households), Pact (1,000 households), and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). These interventions could facilitate households' access to seeds and farming tools. Unfortunately, the area planted has been reduced due to insecurity and lack of inputs.

Phytopathology: Since last year's floods, cassava plant pathology characterized by tuber rot (high water and/or moisture in the soil) has been noted. This phytopathology, has not yet been elucidated; and has ravaged cassava crops. Armyworm is also observed. Its virulence has decreased compared to previous years, particularly due to good agricultural practices and local pharmacopeia (use of emulsion made from chili water and tobacco).

Livestock situation: Livestock farming is rudimentary in the area. Poultry breeding is the most practiced; however, some animal diseases is noted. Small livestock was exterminated during the 2016 crisis period. A resilience support project implemented by the WFP and FAO also plans to support farmer households in strengthening this activity in the Nyunzu territory.

Mining activities: The Nyunzu territory abounds with artisanal mineral extraction sites, the largest of which are Kisengo, Musebe, and Mulunguyi. Mining activities have tentatively resumed at the Kisengo site, which is the largest, while the other sites are still insecure because of armed groups. There has been a significant influx of young people to the Kisengo site, although artisanal mining has not yet returned to its pre-crisis level. Continuing these mining activities could improve this territory's income sources.

Figure 6. Projections for maize flour prices in Kalemie



Source: *FEWS NET*

Market operations: During this period, there was an exaggerated increase in commodity prices due to agriculture abandonment (Figure 6). Also, trade flows from Kalemie (where imported products from Tanzania are stored) are blocked because roads are impassable. For example, currently, 1 POMPA (local measure) of maize weighing 20 kg costs 32,000 FC in the Nyunzu market, while in Kalemie, this amount costs 20,000 FC.

In recent years, due to global warming, there has been a steady decrease in the phenomenon known as *saba-saba,* marked by violent waves and storms on Lake Tanganyika. This situation allows the continuation of fishing on the lake and exchanges between the Tanganyika and Tanzania provinces via the lake during the lean season. Furthermore, given the integration of the markets, this situation could allow the availability of main commodities on markets in the Nyunzu territory.

The state of agricultural service roads: Roads are difficult to access due to their advanced state of disrepair. They are also insecure due to armed groups. This situation does not facilitate connection and exchange between different areas.

Many farmers do not have access to markets to sell their produce. Road degradation could ultimately worsen with the next rainy season.

Humanitarian assistance: According to data from the food security cluster, more than 154,519 people received food security assistance during the first half of the year, notably through the WFP and Concern. Forecasts for the year's second half include assistance to more than 14,907 households, of which more than 13,000 will receive a full WFP ration for three months. This territory, therefore, received significant humanitarian assistance in 2022.

Current Food Security Outcomes

One of the direct consequences of the shocks in Nyunzu is declining food consumption as a result of decreased quantity and diversity of food consumed by households. Difficulty accessing fields due to conflict and the decline of other livelihoods have reduced crop yields and impacted local availability and household food consumption.

During this lean season, household food consumption is declining due to the early depletion of stocks from the previous season and the food consumption deficits observed during the previous seasons. The food consumption situation was concerning In July 2022 (post-harvest period). The vast majority of households had low food consumption in quantity and quality.

Faced with aforementioned shocks and problems threatening livelihoods, households in the area have resorted to Stressed strategies such as selling household assets and household members' clothing to cover their basic needs by disposing of their assets. Households without land access have developed severe strategies since the last harvest, including selling productive assets (i.e., agricultural equipment). Poor households among the displaced and returnees, who have not had land access, are developing negative coping strategies such as begging.

Assumptions

The most likely scenario for food security from October 2022 to May 2023 is based on the following fundamental assumptions, in relation to the changing regional context:

- **Mining activities:** With the gradual return of peace to the area, there has been an influx of young people to the mining sites. This situation could promote the emergence of this livelihood, especially since the price of the main mining material, coltan (columbite-tantalum), which is mined in this area, is doing well on the international market.
- **Agricultural production:** Given the normal start of the 2022/2023 growing season A and the gradual return of displaced populations, agricultural production could be expected to be higher than last year but lower than normal.
- **Market operations:** Based on the integration of markets in the province of Tanganyika, this area will experience price fluctuations for the next eight months. From August to October 2022, prices will increase to an average of 26 percent and may stabilize or decrease from November to December 2022. This typical price behavior will result from the availability of green crops from growing season A and the sale of fishing products.
- **Conflicts and population movements:** Given the improved security conditions in Nyunzu, the return of displaced populations to their places of origin may be observed.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

October 2022 to January 2023: The period from October to November includes the peak of the lean season, during which food access will be difficult for poor households. Food consumption deficits will mark this period. Households that have grown crops will experience early stock depletion and will depend solely on market purchases during the first two months of this period until mid-December, when the green harvest begins. Additionally, displaced households who have not had land access will be able to serve as agricultural laborers for middle-income and wealthy groups to access income and cover their food needs. During this projected period, households will use Crisis strategies to cover their food needs. The territory will be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3).

February to May 2023: In the first two months of this scenario period (February to March), the main crops of growing season A will flood the local markets. There will be sufficient food availability in the territory. Households that have grown crops will depend on their own production until the end of March 2023. In the last two months, April to May, poor households will have difficult food access. On the security front, with the likely arrival of the regional force and the mutualized tracking of armed groups, displaced households will still be in their displacement environment. There will be a food deficit, with almost no access to livelihoods. The area will remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3).

Recommended citation: FEWS NET. DRC Food Security Outlook, October 2022 to May 2023: Increasing displacement of populations hinders livelihood access, 2022.

ABOUT SCENARIO DEVELOPMENT

To project food security outcomes for the coming eight months, 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 develop scenarios estimating food security outcomes. FEWS NET usually warns of the most likely scenario. Learn more here.