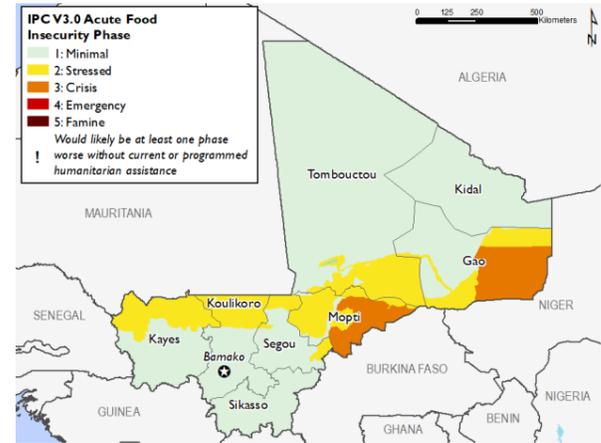


The impact of COVID-19 is increasing the vulnerability of poor households to food insecurity

KEY MESSAGES

- The spread of COVID-19 to all regions of the country and the difficulties in tracing contacts are causes for concern in Mali, stretching the country’s health facilities which already had limited treatment capacity. The resulting restrictions and economic disruptions are increasing vulnerability to food insecurity in urban areas and in areas relying on migrant remittances.
- The 2020–2021 agricultural growing season in Mali started thanks to the onset of rains at the end of May. Forecasts for normal to excess rainfall support average to above average agropastoral production. Production prospects are 6 percent higher than for 2020 and 18.5 percent higher than the five-year average (Planning and Statistics Unit/Rural Development), which will support good cereal supplies.
- The early lean season in the western Sahel, Liptako-Gourma and some areas in the north of the country, as well as declining incomes, are leading poor households to resort to some degree of negative coping strategies to meet their food needs, depending on their area. As a result, these households will experience Crisis (IPC Phase 3) food insecurity in the Liptako-Gourma area and Stressed (IPC Phase 2) in the western Sahel and north of the country, from June to September.
- The average to above-average harvests expected in October 2020, as well as falling prices and improved terms of trade between livestock and cereals, will improve household access to food. As a result, most households in the country will experience Minimal (IPC Phase 1) food insecurity between October 2020 and January 2021. For Liptako-Gourma households, displaced persons and flood victims, the aftermath of the degradation of their livelihoods will continue to have an impact, leading to Stressed (IPC Phase 2) food insecurity or worse.

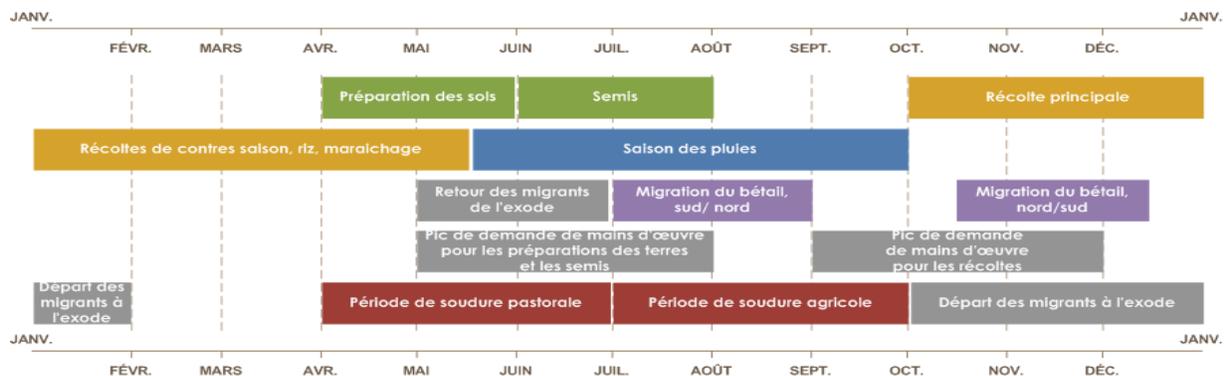
Current food security outcomes, June 2020



Source: FEWS NET

FEWS NET classification is IPC-compatible. IPC-compatible analysis follows key IPC protocols but does not necessarily reflect the consensus of national food security partners.

SEASONAL CALENDAR FOR A TYPICAL YEAR



Source: FEWS NET

NATIONAL OVERVIEW

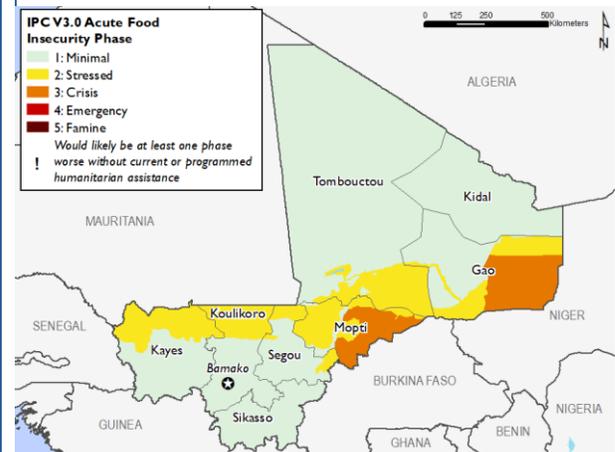
Current Situation

Impact of COVID-19: The COVID-19 pandemic continues in Mali and is affecting all parts of the country, particularly Tombouctou, where the number of cases increased significantly during the month. As of 28 June 2020, the cumulative number of confirmed cases since the beginning of the COVID-19 epidemic in Mali was 2,147, with a fatality rate of 5.3 percent. The government’s heavy restrictions since April 2020, involving the closure of hotels and public spaces (bars, cultural facilities) and the reduction in working hours, all under a 9 p.m. to 6 a.m. curfew, have reduced the country’s economic activity (handicrafts, transport, commerce and hospitality), especially in urban centers. These restrictions are the main cause of job losses for 50.4 percent of households in Bamako and 39.4 percent in rural areas (Mali National Institute of Statistics – INSTAT/World Bank Report, May 2020). In addition, according to the World Food Program (WFP) mobile Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (mVAM) project, the decline in migrant remittances from external countries to over two thirds of households (64.5 percent) has reduced the ability of households dependent on them (mainly in the western Sahel and Niger River Valley) to adequately meet their food and non-food needs. According to the INSTAT/World Bank survey, 53.3 percent of households are concerned about not having enough food to eat, due to lack of resources or money. This is followed by concerns for 45.6 percent of households about eating food of low quality. One in ten households (9.9 percent) has had physical experience of hunger. The main strategies undertaken by households to mitigate the impact of the crisis were as follows: 16.9 percent of households were selling assets, 10.2 percent were engaging in additional income-generating activities, 10.1 percent were mobilizing savings, and 9.7 percent of households were seeking assistance from friends or family. Despite the easing of restrictions, economic activities are being slow to regain average levels, both in Mali and in migrant host countries.

The closure of land and air borders between countries has reduced trade flows, even though these measures do not officially apply to the transport of freight/goods. In addition, the government has imposed a ban on the export of certain foodstuffs, limiting the level of export of local products and cancelling most orders from European countries for certain cash crops (livestock, fruit, handicrafts). The decline is mainly felt in food products (cereals, fruit) and much less in livestock (8 percent of export revenue).

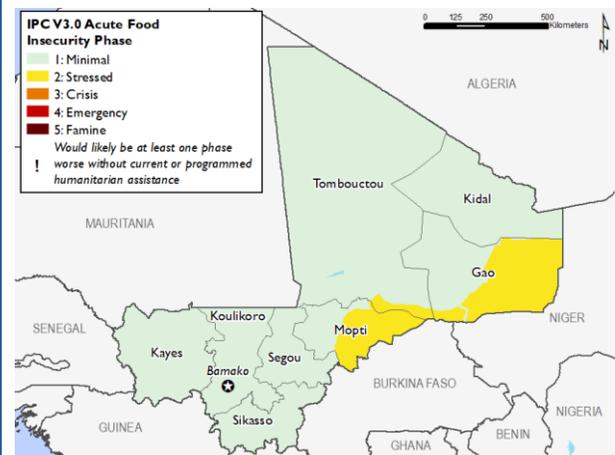
Temporary job losses following the closure of companies and industrial units in migrant host countries due to COVID-19 are limiting capacities for remittances to countries of origin. According to mVAM in May 2020, around 65.4 percent of households are reporting a decline in income from migration, with a strong decline for over one third of households (35.8 percent).

Projected food security outcomes, June to September 2020



Source: FEWS NET

Projected food security outcomes, October 2020 to January 2021



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.

Agropastoral production: The onset of rainfall is continuing. This is boosting the new agricultural growing season and improving livestock conditions. Cumulative rainfall as of 20 June is normal to excess throughout the country, except in parts of Gao, Tombouctou, Ménaka and Kidal. Harvests of off-season market garden crops have been completed and are considered average to good overall. For off-season cereals (rice, wheat), for which harvests are underway, production outlooks are average overall. This will improve the availability of these foods in the areas concerned. Flood recession crops (millet, sorghum, rice, cowpeas) are developing normally in the lake areas of Tombouctou and Mopti. The new agricultural growing season is getting underway with the transport of organic manure, field clearing, ploughing and sowing. These activities provide income and food opportunities for poor households in agricultural areas. However, continued insecurity in the Liptako-Gourma area will reduce production levels as a result of populations being unable to access their operations.

Improving livestock conditions thanks to the rainfall recorded are bringing the pastoral lean season to an end in Mali's southern agricultural areas, as pastures and watering holes begin to replenish. The physical condition of livestock is average overall; hence the average level of livestock production. Herds are beginning to return to the usual concentration areas in the southern parts of the country, although slowly in the western Sahel where the pastoral lean season has been more difficult and where livestock conditions remain poor. Insecurity continues to disrupt herd movements in the central and northern parts of Mali. The animal health situation is stable overall, and the livestock vaccination campaign is ongoing with the support of humanitarian partners.

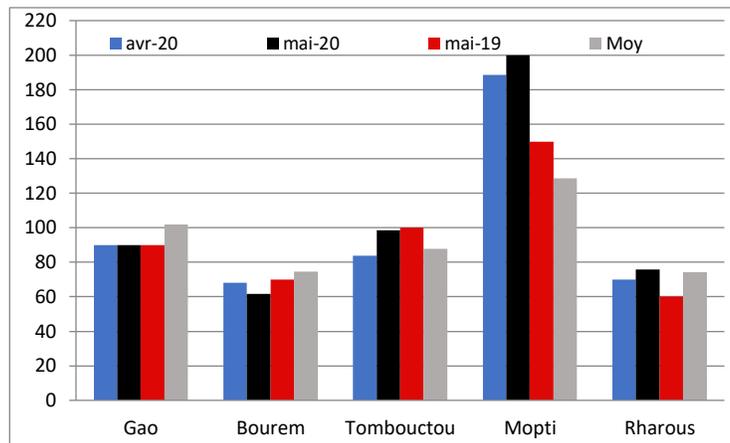
Fish production: There is the usual increase in catches thanks to the lifting of bans and to collective fishing in ponds. Catches are considered average overall, except in parts of the Niger Delta in Mopti, where disruptions are reported due to the insecurity in the area.

Markets and prices: Cereal supplies are sufficient overall, despite the decreased flow of imported foods (rice, pasta, oils, powdered milk) due to COVID-19 restrictions. Farmers' habitual destocking to meet financial needs for the new growing season, off-season harvests, and the increasing relaxation of restrictive measures between countries are helping to increase market supply to average levels. Disruptions in flows are however observed, due to difficulties in population movement, particularly in border areas as a result of COVID-19, as well as persistent insecurity in the central and northern areas of the country.

At the end of May, the price of the main cereal crop in all markets in the regional capitals, compared with the five-year average, was higher in Kayes (+14 percent), Gao (+6 percent) and Kidal (+4 percent), and lower in Mopti (-18 percent), Sikasso and Ségou (-14 percent), Tombouctou (-13 percent) and Koulikoro (-9 percent). This price level is largely similar to or lower than last year's level over the same period.

Livestock supply to markets is stable or reduced overall, due to COVID-19 measures which are limiting demand outside the country, and also due to the broadly normal pastoral lean season, which is not prompting atypical sales except in the western Sahel and in insecure areas. Livestock prices are average to above average in agricultural markets in the south of the country, but average to below average in the Mopti, Gao and Tombouctou regions for large ruminants, due to a decline in demand. This is reducing the income of pastoral households. At the end of May, the price of goats, the animal most frequently sold by poor households, was down against the five-year average in Gao (-6 percent) and Bourem (-5 percent), up in Douentza (+11 percent), Mopti (+28 percent), Goundam (+19 percent) and Ménaka (+25 percent), and similar to average in Gourma Rharous and Tombouctou. This is favorable to average to above-average pastoral income for wealthy households who still have animals, unlike poor households who are limited because of their much-reduced animal numbers due to high demand since the start of the crisis in 2012. Compared with the average, terms of trade are up in Tombouctou (+12 percent) and Ménaka (+24 percent), but down in Gao (-12 percent), Bourem (-7 percent) and Ansongo (-8 percent).

Figure 1: Terms of trade for millet/goats (kg/animal)



Source: FEWS NET

Access to food: Household access to food in this lean season remains a challenge for poor households in the Liptako-Gourma and western Sahel areas, which, in addition to early depletion of their stocks, are experiencing reduced incomes due to security disruptions and/or the decline in migrant remittances. Around 28 percent of households (mVAM May 2020) have experienced difficulties in accessing food during the month, mainly due to lower incomes and rising food prices (+19.8 percent). Staple food price trends remain favorable to household access to food. However, the overall decline in incomes, especially in remittances for which a sharp decrease is observed by 37.8 percent of households, is adversely affecting the ability of households to access markets.

Population movements: The return of workers to their home areas continues in Mali's agricultural regions. Disruptions to their movements in and out of neighboring countries have been reported, as a result of restrictions due to COVID-19. The gradual lifting of lockdowns has enabled a resumption of movement. In the central and northern parts of the country, persistent security incidents continue to generate unusual movements of people in search of more secure areas. By the end of May 2020, more than 250,998 internally displaced persons had been recorded, with more than 40 percent of them in the Mopti region alone. There were also reports of refugee arrivals from Burkina Faso and Niger in the Ménaka and Gao area.

Humanitarian assistance: Food assistance, mainly in the form of cash transfers, has been provided to poor populations and displaced persons by the government and humanitarian agencies from January to date. Thus, 717,279 people have been given monthly assistance, 313,473 of them in April alone, mainly in the regions of Ménaka, Gao, Kayes, Mopti, Tombouctou and Kidal (Food Security Cluster, June 2020). The current National Response Plan consists of food support from June to September for approximately 1.6 million people, while livelihood support will be available to nearly 2.5 million people.

Security: The security situation continues to be marked by ongoing security incidents that are negatively affecting the socioeconomic environment in Mali's central and northern regions. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 367 incidents were recorded nationally in May 2020, compared with 144 in January, 351 in February and 332 in April. More than 75 percent of the incidents reported in May (282 incidents) occurred in the regions of Mopti (175 cases) and Ségou (107 cases) in the center of the country. The reduction in employment opportunities and incomes relative to the average for households in the area with stressed livelihoods or in need of protection, is limiting the ability of households to meet their food and non-food needs. Difficulties in accessing basic social services (health, education, markets) and in implementing humanitarian assistance are further worsening the living conditions of households in the affected areas, particularly displaced households. At the end of May, Mali was host to more than 250,998 internally displaced persons (Commission on Population Movements report, end April 2020) and 45,749 refugees from Niger, Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Cote d'Ivoire (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees – UNHCR, May 2020).

Assumptions

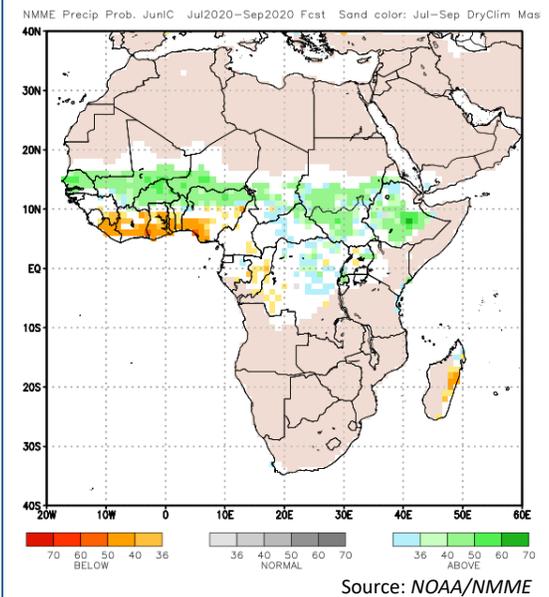
The most likely food security scenario from June 2020 to January 2021 is based on the following underlying assumptions regarding trends in nationwide conditions:

- **COVID-19 restrictions:** Despite a continued increase in the number of cases in the country, measures have been relaxed, with suspension of the curfew and partial re-opening of schools. These new arrangements will reduce the impact of COVID-19 on certain economic activities within the country. However, the likely spread of the pandemic, and the changing social behavior of individuals to safeguard their individual health, may lead to a de facto limitation on activities in several sectors and continue the significant decline in income.
 - **Export income of the country:** Despite the willingness of countries to resume trading, the sluggish recovery and numerous health restrictions will continue to limit the export levels of local products, combined with the cancellation of most orders to European countries for certain cash crops (fruit, livestock, cereals). This will reduce the country's export income during the period.
 - **Migrant remittances:** According to the World Bank, there is expected to be a 20 percent decline in remittances from the United States and 40 percent from the European Union.

Together with Central African countries, these are the main destinations for Mali's migrants. Decreasing migrant incomes due to weak economic recovery, and problems with remittances because of the travel ban, will more than halve remittances to the country.

- Security situation and population movements:** Security disruptions continue in the northern and central regions, where there are regular armed attacks, despite increased patrols and ongoing military operations. The resulting dispersion of armed groups has led to an increase in pockets of tension. According to FEWS NET, the volatile security situation is expected to continue from June to January in the regions of Tombouctou, Gao, Kidal and northern Ségou, and particularly in Ménaka and Mopti (Liptako-Gourma) where community conflicts are frequent. The resulting unusual population movements are expected to continue in line with the security situation, for which negotiations are ongoing.
- Rainfall/flooding:** The consensus forecasts by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration/North American Multi-Model Ensemble (NOAA NMME), International Research Institute for Climate and Society (IRI) and Regional Climate Outlook Forum for Sudan o-Sahelian Africa (PRESASS) in June 2020 indicate a high probability of normal to excess cumulative rainfall in Mali, particularly in the center, where excess rainfall is expected. The early onset of rains, according to the same forecasts, is also conducive to a timely start to the country's agropastoral calendar. A good temporal and geographical distribution of rainfall is needed to ensure a good level of agricultural production for the current growing season. The same applies to the various rivers serving Mali in the Niger and Senegal river basins, whose flows are expected to be average or above average.
- Locust invasion:** The desert locust situation remains stable overall, but with solitary adults in the northeast of the country in the Timetrine and Tin Ekar areas. According to the [FAO desert locust bulletin](#), there will be limited breeding in these areas of habitual presence in the coming months. Given the current conditions, particularly those favorable to sustaining desert locusts in the areas of concern (Arabian Peninsula, East Africa, Sudan), a large-scale locust invasion in the Sahel is not likely at this time, but it is not implausible. Given the current favorable situation in the Sahel, which is set to continue, and the current location of the locusts, although swarms may arrive in the Sahel they are not expected to be large-scale swarms that would seriously jeopardize harvests.
- Agricultural production:** Preparations for the new agricultural growing season are underway throughout Mali. Favorable seasonal forecasts in terms of climatic factors (rainfall and floods), the continuing national state agricultural input subsidy program (seeds and fertilizer), and the continuing hydro-agricultural development programs, suggest average to above-average cereal production in the country in October 2020. The same is true for flood recession crops in the Tombouctou and Mopti lakes area, where average flooding in 2019 increased the area under cultivation. Average to above-average harvests are expected in August/September for flood recession crops, October/November for millet, sorghum and seasonal maize, and December/January for rice. This assumes that other unfavorable conditions are under control, such as the negative impact of COVID-19 on the supply of inputs and mobility of supervisors, and regular infestations including armyworm. Support in terms of agricultural supplies, particularly in the northern regions, by the FAO, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and other NGOs as part of resilience-building programs, will strengthen beneficiary households' productive capacities. However, localized declines in production are expected in Liptako-Gourma, where conflicts will limit access to fields for some households.
- Animal production/livestock movements:** The normal pastoral lean season in most agropastoral zones, and the timely onset of rainfall supporting the usual restoration of livestock conditions, are conducive to normal resumption of livestock production (milk, butter and meat) from June to July. The peak in production will be reached in August/September and will be at average levels.

Figure 2. NMME precipitation forecast July to September 2020



- **Transhumance:** Herds are located in dry season concentration areas around permanent water points (wells, ponds and rivers). A return toward winter pasture is starting due to livestock conditions being restored. Disruptions in conflict areas will continue with less intensity, thanks to improved livestock conditions which support widespread dispersion.
- **Agropastoral lean season:** The agropastoral lean season that begins in June will be normal for most of the country's population, owing to average household access to food following the good 2019 harvests. However, poor households' dependence on markets for one to two months longer than usual in the poor production areas of Gao, Mopti and Tombouctou, which are experiencing a drop in income compared with the average, will lead to the lean season starting a month or more earlier than in a normal year. The same is true for poor households in the country's urban centers, as well as areas dependent on migrant remittances. This is because of the negative impact of COVID-19 measures, which have reduced household incomes through the reduction in economic activities and the decline of more than 20-40 percent in remittances for over two thirds of households.

Markets and prices

- **Market supplies:** Traditional market supply channels continue to function, albeit with a decline in trade flows for imported products due to the slowdown in movements from export countries and port-level compliance with hygiene measures. Local supply channels are continuing normally in the absence of lockdown measures. However, the decline in market access is reducing market availability, which in some places is leading to fluctuations in food supply during this period of seasonal decline in supply. These fluctuations are more evident in the northern regions because of the insecurity currently disrupting trade flows. The good market availability of cereals throughout the country, thanks to good cereal production in 2019 and average to above-average stock levels, will contribute to good cereal supplies from June to October. The average to good new harvests expected in October/November will lead to the usual increase in the market supply of cereals. The availability of imported foodstuffs will depend on how the COVID-19 situation evolves in supply markets.
- **Staple foods prices:** The seasonal upward trend in cereal prices is observed, but it is less marked than in a normal year, as a result of their good availability and falling demand for industrial units and exports due to the impacts of COVID-19 throughout the country. Staple cereal prices are similar to below average in production areas and similar to above average in consumption areas. According to the FEWS NET price projection system, cereal prices will be below or similar to average in the main markets. However, the decline in flows for imported foodstuffs (rice, milk, oil, wheat flour, sugar) has increased the prices of these commodities by 5 to 15 percent compared with the average, or by more than 20 percent in the northern regions. The government's relief measures have made it possible to limit this increase and maintain prices at an average level in areas of the south where trade services are controlled. The increase, which is linked to COVID-19 restrictions, is expected to become less marked from June onwards as a result of the relaxation of these measures in import countries.
- **Livestock prices:** There is a seasonal decline in livestock prices on the markets due to the usual deterioration in their physical condition. Poor livestock conditions in the western Sahel strip of Kayes, insecurity in the central and northern parts of the country, in addition to border closures with neighboring countries, have reduced demand for livestock on the markets, leading to falls in livestock prices, especially for cattle. Similar to slightly above average livestock prices due to Ramadan demand will improve seasonally, as a result of the recovery of livestock conditions which will help improve the physical condition of livestock. Disruptions in household access to markets in the insecure areas of Ménaka and Mopti, and the willingness of the households concerned to carry out emergency sales, will reduce price levels to below average in these areas.
- **Humanitarian assistance:** Food and non-food assistance continues throughout Mali for food insecure households, of which there are estimated to be over 5 million (National Response Plan). Food distribution, initiated by the government with the support of humanitarian partners, of more than 56,000 tons of cereal is underway and will continue until September. The emergence of COVID-19, with its impact on the population, has increased the number of people in need. These additional needs require additional funds which are not always available. Compliance with control measures is also requiring a reorganization of the logistics system, such as increasing the number of distribution points and/or changing the type of intervention (cash distribution instead of direct food supply) and causing delays in implementation. The budget overruns, in addition to problems with humanitarian access to insecure areas, are likely to negatively affect the impact of assistance on the populations in need.
- **Institutional stock replenishment:** Institutional purchases are underway in major production markets for replenishment of the national food security stock under the National Response Plan (more than 20,000 tons of cereal). These institutional purchases that are taking place outside the usual period should not have a major impact on supply and prices, given the

high levels of market stock and the fact that suppliers had already been preparing themselves by building up stock since last year.

- **Migration:** Workers who had left in search of earnings for their households are currently returning to the country's agricultural areas, thanks to the onset of rains which is boosting the new growing season. Workers already in the country should be able to return without major problems, but there will be disruption for those based in neighboring countries because of the travel ban between countries due to COVID-19. Seasonal migration income has been negatively affected by the closure of gold mining sites, which attract workers, and by the decline in economic activity in urban centers in Mali and in neighboring countries. Average to below-average income brought back in June, or sent during workers' time away, will allow households to improve their access to markets, especially in areas of declining agricultural production, where departures have occurred earlier than usual.
- **Fisheries:** The fishing season ends in June, as river water levels rise again, and the new agricultural growing season begins. There will be the usual decrease in catches from June to September due to higher water levels in rivers. The expected average to above-average flow level in rivers, according to seasonal forecasting (PRESASS) will support the satisfactory reproduction of fish species. Outlooks for the next fishing season starting in November 2020 will therefore be average to above average overall.
- **Nutrition:** There is the usual deterioration in the nutritional situation (due to the depletion of stocks for small producers, the seasonal rise in food prices, and the prevalence of diseases such as malaria, acute kidney injuries, etc.), which will continue until September. The prevalence of global acute malnutrition is 10.0 percent [9.1-11.0] according to the July 2019 Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions (SMART) survey. Despite the expected deterioration, prevalence is not expected to be significantly different to the five-year average, which was 10.7 percent according to the SMART lean season surveys. However, above-average deterioration will occur in insecure areas where access to basic social services is limited, and in areas of poor production resorting to food coping strategies such as reduced meal volume and quality, which are detrimental to household nutrition. From July/August onwards, the availability of milk and milk products and ongoing food assistance will limit deterioration in the nutritional situation, particularly in areas where nutritional screening and recovery programs are continuing. With the emergence of COVID-19, there has also been a decline in attendance at health facilities, which is putting vulnerable groups at greater risk of acute malnutrition.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

Overall average to above-average cereal availability in the country, and overall similar to below-average prices for foodstuffs, are favorable to average access to food for most households. As a result, most households in the country will experience Minimal (IPC Phase 1) food insecurity between June 2020 and January 2021. However, the early lean season resulting from the early depletion of stocks in the western Sahel area of Kayes and the Liptako-Gourma area, as well as the reduction in income due to COVID-19, are limiting the ability of poor households to access food during this lean season. The poor or borderline food consumption score of 22.4 percent, according to mVAM May 2020, indicates a nutritional deterioration compared with February (18.2 percent). This is thought to be more marked in the western Sahel area of Kayes, Liptako-Gourma and parts of the northern regions.

From July to September 2020, due to stock depletion and decreased income because of COVID-19, poor households in the western Sahel will adopt atypical strategies such as unusual livestock sales, increased labor, reduced non-food expenditure and borrowing to meet their food needs. The current Stressed (IPC Phase 2) food insecurity will therefore continue until October 2020, after which the expected average harvests will allow easy access to food. Poor households in Liptako-Gourma and Ménaka have livelihood protection deficits ranging from 37 percent in Bandiagara to 95 percent in Koro, due to the aftermath of continuing insecurity in the area, following looting and damage to property. In addition, the economic disruption and unusual displacement of populations relying mainly on humanitarian assistance will mean that poor households in this area are in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) food insecurity from June to September 2020.

From October 2020 to January 2021, the availability of own production (although low), payments in kind from the harvest, wild products, and the fall in cereal prices favorable to terms of trade for livestock/cereals will allow households to meet their food needs without resorting to atypical coping strategies. As a result, most pastoral and agropastoral households will return to Minimal (IPC Phase 1) food insecurity from October to January. However, poor households affected by flooding, displaced

populations and returning refugees will have difficulty meeting their food expenditure and livelihood recovery needs, and will therefore experience Stressed (IPC Phase 2) food insecurity until January 2021. The same will apply to poor households in urban centers and those dependent on migrant remittances.

Events that Might Change the Outlook

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

Area	Event	Impact on food security outcomes
National	Delayed and/or inadequate onset of rainfall from June to August	A delay in the onset of rains would prolong the pastoral lean season more than usual, which could increase the risk of higher livestock mortality due to a deterioration in their physical condition and, as a result, cause a decline in income from livestock sales. The delay in planting crops would negatively affect the expected cereal production in September 2020.
	Impact of COVID-19 on the national economy	The impact of the decline in economic activity due to COVID-19 will continue to be felt, both on the country's economy and on individual household incomes, despite the relaxation of government restrictions. An uncontrolled spread of cases would increase the impact of the crisis and food insecurity in the country, due to lower incomes and limited trade flows in the country.
	Damage by crop pests from July to September (desert locust, armyworm, grain-eating birds)	Significant damage to crops and pasture by armyworm (crops) and desert locusts (crops and herbaceous and woody pasture) would reduce food availability for both humans and animals. The resulting rise in cereal prices and pastoral crisis would negatively affect the ability of households to meet their food needs.
	Flooding due to heavy rains or a marked rise in river levels	Loss of crops and cereal stocks, and destruction of habitat and equipment, in affected areas from July to September would negatively affect household livelihoods and reduce the ability of households to adequately meet their food needs, especially for the poorest.
Northern and central Mali	Heightened market disruption due to insecurity	Heightened security incidents would further impact the economy in the affected areas, negatively affecting income, household livelihoods and market supplies in the area.
Zones ML10 and ML11	Demand by cotton producers as a result of rising prices of supplies and expected decline in their incomes	The forecasted fall of about 9 percent in the per-kilogram price of cotton (from XOF 275 to XOF 250) and the difficulties in accessing supplies may lead some producers to cultivate cereals instead of cotton. This could significantly increase the production of cereals and legumes in the country, thus increasing food availability.

AREAS OF CONCERN

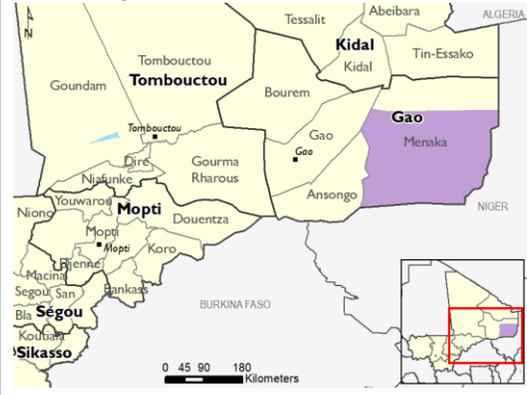
Livelihood zones 2 and 4: Northern livestock farming area, Ménaka region

Current situation

Pastoral situation: The usual degradation of pastures and water points continues. The physical condition of livestock is judged to be average overall, as is milk production. However, difficulties in accessing some pastures due to insecurity have negatively affected livestock feeding and led to poor physical condition and a sharp reduction in milk production, reducing pastoral incomes to below-average levels. Animal health is relatively stable.

Markets: Cereal supplies remain sufficient overall, although there has been a decline in the flows of foods imported from Niger and Algeria, linked to COVID-19 border closures. Millet prices in the main markets in the area are stable compared with last month. Compared with the five-year average, prices increased in Gao (+6 percent) and Ménaka (+10 percent) and remained similar in Ansongo, which is favorable to household access to markets. The deterioration in terms of trade, relative to the five-year average, continued in Gao (-12 percent) and Ansongo (-8 percent), while there was an improvement of 14 percent in Ménaka owing to the fall in the price of millet, which is only benefiting wealthy households who still have livestock.

Figure 3. Map of livelihood zones 2 and 4 in the Ménaka region



Livelihood trends: The decline in the level of economic activity due to security disruptions, in addition to the decline in migrant remittances due to the impact of COVID-19 and the decline in livestock exports to Algeria and Niger, have reduced household incomes in the area and consequently their purchasing power. Unusual movements of households, involving loss of goods and cessation of economic activities, is contributing to a significant deterioration in their livelihoods, which were already under pressure. The use of crisis and emergency strategies by 14.9 percent of households in the area, according to the February 2020 National Food Security and Nutrition Survey (ENSAN), is indicative of the difficulties faced by households in meeting their food and non-food needs. Low numbers of saleable livestock due to their depletion among the poor, and restrictions relating to the closure of the borders between Mali, Niger and Algeria, are reducing incomes below normal, despite livestock prices being similar to above average.

Humanitarian assistance: Various partners are continuing to provide humanitarian assistance in the form of food and non-food items to both displaced households and host households. The government and humanitarian agencies are planning to provide assistance to 120,481 people during the lean season from June to September. However, problems with humanitarian access to certain areas and with financial mobilization may limit the level of humanitarian assistance.

Security situation and population movements: The security situation remains characterized by ongoing security incidents that continue to disrupt the socioeconomic environment and cause unusual population movements. The resulting unusual population movements, especially in the triangular border belt between Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso, are increasing the vulnerability of already badly hit households. At the end of May 2020, 20,991 displaced persons had been recorded according to the Commission on Population Movements. These displaced persons require assistance with food, money, shelter and non-food items.

Assumptions

The most likely food security outcome in the northern livestock farming zone from June 2020 to January 2021 is based on the following specific assumptions:

Market supplies and cereal prices: Market supply will continue despite the security challenges and the access problems due to impassable inland roads during the rainy season from July to August, which reduce the level of flows. The price of millet is not expected to change significantly from the current level and is expected to be around 5 to 10 percent above average. For imported foods, despite the fall in prices compared with March (the start of COVID-19), prices will remain 10 to 20 percent higher than average, which consequently reduces household access to these foodstuffs vital to adequate nutrition.

Pastoral conditions/production: Livestock conditions will see a seasonal improvement with the onset of rainfall from July, bringing the pastoral lean season to an end and reviving milk production in the area. The improvement in the physical condition of livestock, thanks to improved livestock conditions up until January, will contribute to improving pastoral income because of demand for the Eid al-Adha celebrations. The movements of livestock towards the areas of winter concentration will continue to be disrupted by the recurrence of community conflicts and armed groups, particularly along the border with Niger. However, overall income from animal sales and animal production will remain below average due to the reduction in livestock capital, particularly for very poor households.

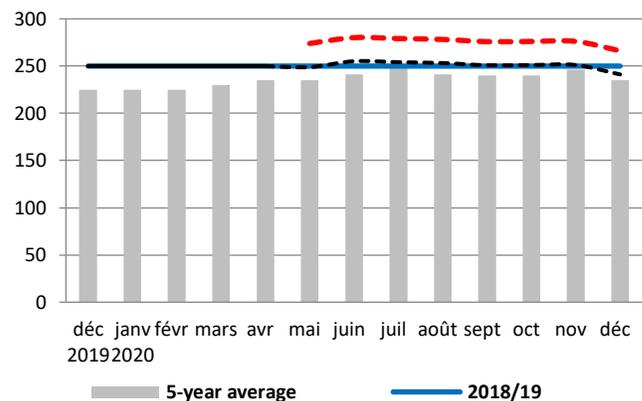
Livelihood trends: The continued conflicts in the area are continuing to diminish local employment opportunities, and even halt certain economic activities (handicrafts, self-employment) because of unusual population movements. The economic situation is not expected to improve between June 2020 and January 2021, in view of the increase in security incidents and military operations, particularly in the Liptako-Gourma area. The decline in remittance income due to the impact of COVID-19 in host areas, and the damage to property during attacks will further affect the livelihoods of households in the area. Livelihood pressures will increase, leading to a livelihood protection deficit for 10 percent of the population, and a subsistence deficit for 5 percent of households in agricultural areas between June and September, according to the September 2019 FEWS NET Outcome Analysis.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

The deterioration in the economic situation of households in the area, due to the combined effects of insecurity and the impact of COVID-19 on population movements and activities, has exacerbated food access problems for poor households due to the increase in prices (15 to 30 percent compared with the average) for staple foods that are mainly imported from neighboring countries. The hunger index, which was 24.7 percent in February 2020, will experience its usual increase in the lean season from June to September as a result of an increase in coping strategies. The reduction in food expenditure, and even a reduction in the volume and quality of meals, will further worsen the poor or borderline food consumption score during this lean season, compared with the average for this period of around 13 percent. It was already 17.8 percent in zone 2 and 40 percent in Ménaka in February 2020. Unable to adequately meet their food needs, households will resort to strategies such as borrowing, excessive livestock sales and even selling off livestock, unusual household displacement, and dependence on relatives and humanitarian assistance. A reduction in meal size and even the number of meals for poor households will cause further deterioration in the nutritional situation, which at 15.5 percent is already critical according to the World Health Organization (WHO) threshold. The use of crisis and emergency coping strategies for non-food expenditure, by 42.9 percent of households in the area according to the February ENSAN, is not expected to improve due to the continued insecurity and the impact of COVID-19. As a result, poor households will be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) food insecurity from June to September 2020.

From October 2020 to January 2021, the usual availability of own production (although low), wild products and milk products, and the usual decline in cereal prices, in addition to income from the usual activities (shepherding, trading, labor), will limit

Figure 4. Projection of millet prices in Gao



Source: FEWS NET

the use of negative coping strategies and improve the situation from Crisis (IPC Phase 3) to Stressed (IPC Phase 2) food insecurity

Events that Might Change the Outlook

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

Area	Event	Impact on food security outcomes
Whole region	Lifting/relaxation of border restrictions with Algeria and Niger	The lifting of COVID-19 restrictions will assist the fluidity of trade flows and the movement of migrants with Algeria and Niger. This will lead to lower food prices and increased livestock exports, improving household access to food.
	Epizootic diseases from June to September	Insecurity is limiting the activities of veterinary services. This could lead to an upsurge in epizootic diseases such as foot-and-mouth disease, contagious bovine pleuropneumonia (CBPP), anthrax and blackleg in livestock concentration areas. The loss of resources, through mortality and a decline in animal production, will negatively affect the capital and income of livestock farmers.
	Substantial humanitarian food and non-food support for poor households in the area	Increased support covering at least 50 percent of needs for at least 20 percent of households in the area will help to improve the food situation in the area.

Livelihood zone 9: Sorghum/millet hub in Bankass and Koro

These are communes in the Bankass and Koro areas and neighboring communes of Douentza and Bandiagara that are affected by insecurity and are experiencing significant disruption to economic activity, as well as difficulty growing their crops.

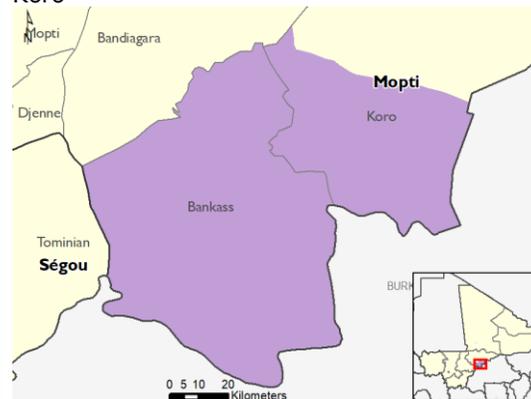
Current situation

Agropastoral production: Preparations for the new agricultural season, such as clearing, manure transportation and in some places dry sowing, are under way in the zone. As in the previous growing season, activities are severely disrupted due to insecurity, which is limiting farmers' access to their fields. In addition to reducing production levels, these access constraints are also reducing employment opportunities for poor households, for whom this is an important source to meet their food and non-food needs. There is the usual deterioration in livestock conditions, but this is more marked in areas that are overburdened due to disruptions to movement because of residual insecurity in the zone. Transhumance herders have begun to return with the onset of rainfall. The availability of milk is low, due to transhumance and to thefts and unusual movements of livestock farming populations in the zone.

Markets: Cereal supplies, which are primarily local except for rice, remain sufficient. There is however a reduction in supply compared with the average, due to decreased attendance at the main markets following robberies, the laying of improvised explosive devices, killings and the closure of the border with Burkina Faso because of COVID-19. There are significant disruptions to markets along the border with Burkina Faso, as a result of increased attacks and military operations in this area better known as Liptako-Gourma. The price of millet, the main cereal, was 17 percent lower than the average in Bankass in late May 2020, and 16 percent lower in Koro and Bandiagara. This is favoring average household access to food, but not for poor households because of the overall decline in their income.

Compared with the five-year average, the price of goats is similar in Bankass (+4 percent) and Bandiagara (+6 percent), and slightly higher in Douentza (+11 percent) and Koro (+25 percent). This is improving the terms of trade between goats and millet in the zone by more than 20 percent (+25 percent in Bankass and Bandiagara, +27 percent in Douentza and +31 percent

Figure 5. Map of livelihood zone 9 in Bankass and Koro



Source: FEWS NET

in Koro). The physical difficulties in accessing markets due to insecurity are preventing people from taking advantage of the average opportunities to sell livestock, which are instead being sold locally at prices significantly lower than the usual prices for the period, in communes heavily affected by insecurity.

Security situation and population movements: The security situation continues to be marked by continued deadly attacks by armed groups and military operations in the zone, particularly in Liptako-Gourma. Continued robberies on major roads, the laying of explosive devices, clashes between armed groups and intercommunity conflicts are limiting the movement of people and goods in the zone. Decreased or interrupted economic activities, looting and theft of livestock and harvests, as well as unusual population movements and loss of life are negatively affecting household livelihoods. At the end of May, 67,034 internally displaced persons were recorded (21,289 in Bankass, 22,787 in Koro, 16,190 in Bandiagara and 6,768 in Douentza). The loss of goods and decreased or interrupted economic activities is limiting the ability of households to adequately meet their food and non-food needs, and their access to basic social services.

Humanitarian assistance: The government and humanitarian agencies are continuing to supply humanitarian food and non-food assistance in the zone, especially for displaced households under the Rapid Response Mechanism and for host populations. This is the main source of food for displaced households. As of the end of May 2020, approximately 302,530 people, or 69.1 percent of the target population, are expected to receive monthly food assistance from June to September 2020, in cash or in kind. The state and humanitarian partners (UNICEF, WFP) are continuing their malnutrition screening and treatment program, although with difficulty due to insecurity in places. In addition to limited access to food, this is contributing to further deterioration in the nutritional situation in the zone.

Assumptions

The most likely food security outcome in the Bankass and Koro conflict zone from June 2020 to January 2021 is based on the following specific assumptions:

- **Security situation:** The security situation in the Liptako-Gourma area, which is experiencing an upsurge in armed attacks, will remain highly volatile despite the efforts of the government, its partners and community leaders. Continued attacks by armed groups, robberies and the laying of explosive devices on major roads will continue to affect the movement of people and goods in the zone.
- **Economic activities:** The disruptions to the movement of people and goods due to recurrent insecurity are not conducive to economic recovery in the zone. The current unusual population movements, and subsequent disruption to economic activities, are resulting in fewer income opportunities for households. This will reduce household incomes to below average from June 2020 to January 2021. The destruction and looting of property (livestock, harvests etc.) will negatively affect the livelihoods of households, 20 percent of whom are already experiencing a protection deficit according to the March 2020 Outcome Analysis.
- **Cereal prices:** There has been a seasonal increase in cereal prices, which will continue until September at a slower pace than in a normal year. The below-average price trend is expected to continue throughout the scenario period, due to below-average demand, especially as the main route to and from Burkina Faso is still seriously disrupted by terrorist attacks, military operations and the closure of borders following COVID-19 restrictions.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

The early stock depletion due to the significant drop in agricultural production caused by insecurity, which has caused poor households to be dependent on the market for longer than usual, requires resources beyond their means in an environment where incomes are declining. Households are currently resorting to an unusual increase in labor, the sale of goods/equipment, unusual livestock sales, dependence on borrowing and migrant remittances, and assistance from relatives/friends and humanitarian agencies, especially for displaced persons, the large majority of whom have lost their autonomy. The deterioration in food consumption is more marked than usual, and the poor or borderline consumption score is 37 percent in Bankass and 34 percent in Koro, according to the World Vision assessment in May 2020, indicating a significant deterioration from the five-year September average of 22.9 percent. Malnutrition will worsen as usual but will be more marked than in an average year due to the early lean season. It will be above the prevalence rate measured in the February 2020 SMART/ENSAN survey, which was 5.7 percent in Bankass and 8.7 percent in Koro. Poor households with a livelihood protection deficit, especially displaced households and those unable to meet their food needs without using negative coping strategies, will experience Stressed (IPC Phase 2!) food insecurity from June to September 2020, with programmed food assistance.

From October 2020 to January 2021, household access to food will be improved thanks to the average availability of harvests from own production, and in-kind payments from the harvests of affluent households and in fairly secure areas. Food consumption will experience its usual improvement with more food diversity and less reliance on food coping strategies. Despite improved access to food, deteriorating livelihoods and ongoing unusual population movements will mean that poor households will be in Stressed (IPC Phase 2) food insecurity.

Events that Might Change the Outlook

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

Area	Event	Impact on food security outcomes
Entire livelihood zones 9 and 13	Worsening security situation	Increased insecurity above the current level would further affect the economic environment in the areas concerned. This would aggravate food insecurity in the area by deteriorating household livelihoods, hindering humanitarian access and access to basic social services.
	Significant reduction in agricultural production	Increasing security incidents, which limit farmers' access to their fields, would lead to significant declines in or even the cessation of agricultural production in parts of the zone. In addition to limiting access by resident households to food, this situation will lead to higher prices on markets outside the area they supply.

Other areas of concern

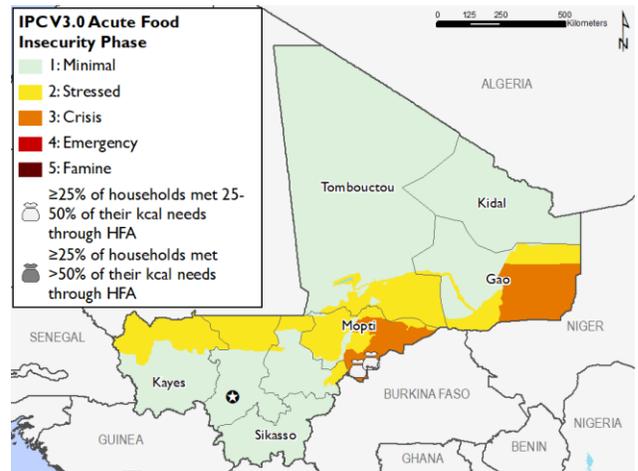
The onset of the lean season one to two months earlier than average, linked to the significant decline in agricultural production in the Niore, Yélimané, Kayes and northern Diéma areas, as well as in parts of the Tombouctou and Gao river band, has affected the ability of poor households in these areas to adequately meet their food and non-food needs. The poor or borderline consumption score of 13.2 percent in February 2020 (ENSAN) is expected to be higher than the 2015-2019 September average of 16.6 percent in livelihood zone 8. Declining incomes, especially through migrant remittances (a moderate to significant decline for 65.4 percent of households), due to COVID-19 and the early depletion of stocks, are leading poor households to scale up labor activities, mobilize savings, resort to borrowing, reduce non-food expenditure and opt for cheaper food. As a result, poor households in these zones will be Stressed (IPC Phase 2) from June to September 2020. The same will apply to poor households affected by flooding during the rainy season, who will find it difficult to adequately meet their food needs and to rebuild their lost livelihoods (food stocks, livestock, crops, habitats, equipment). They will be Stressed (IPC Phase 2) from July 2020 to January 2021.

From October 2020 to January 2021, moderate to significant food availability from new harvests, payments in kind and in cash for harvest work, and the seasonal decline in food prices, will support unhindered access to food for most households in these zones. As a result, these households will experience Minimal (IPC Phase 1) food insecurity.

MOST LIKELY FOOD SECURITY OUTCOMES AND AREAS RECEIVING SIGNIFICANT LEVELS OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE*

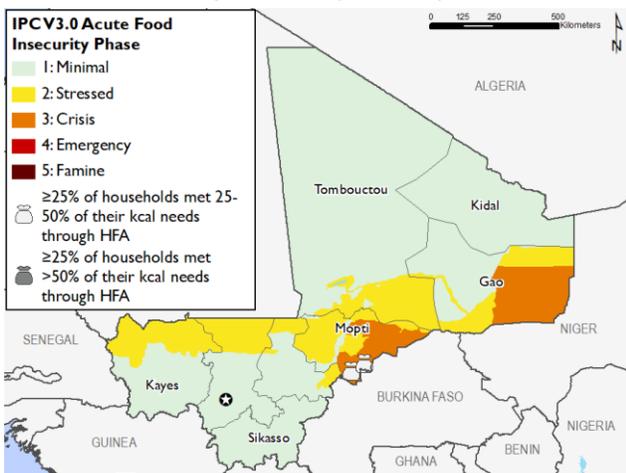
Each of these maps adheres to IPC v3.0 humanitarian assistance mapping protocols and flags where significant levels of humanitarian assistance are being/are expected to be provided. 🏠 indicates that at least 25 percent of households receive on average 25–50 percent of caloric needs through humanitarian food assistance (HFA). 🏠 indicates that at least 25 percent of households receive on average over 50 percent of caloric needs through HFA. This mapping protocol differs from the (!) protocol used in the maps at the top of the report. The use of (!) indicates areas that would likely be at least one phase worse in the absence of current or programmed humanitarian assistance.

Current, June 2020



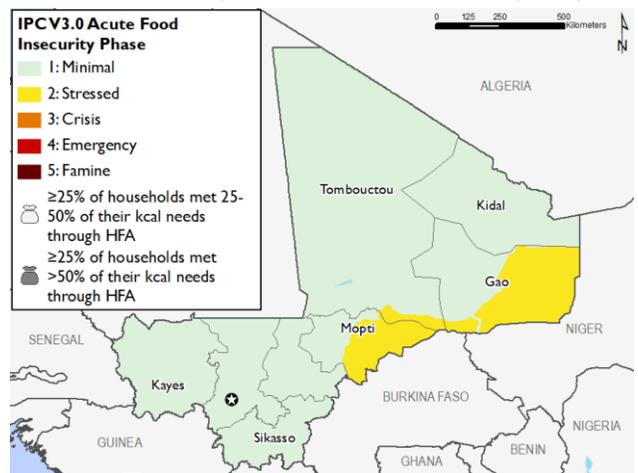
Source: FEWS NET

Projected food security outcomes, June to September 2020



Source: FEWS NET

Projected food security outcomes, October 2020 to January 2021



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.

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.](#)