

*Increase in food insecurity linked to the continued deterioration of livelihoods in the Liptako Gourma region*

**KEY MESSAGES**

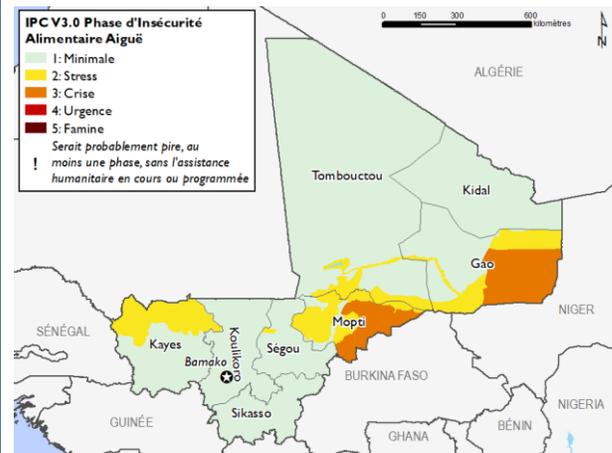
- Overall average to above-average food availability allows for adequate supply of markets throughout the country. Cereal prices are near or above the five-year average, allowing most households food access during the post-harvest period. As a result, most households face Minimal (IPC Phase 1) food insecurity.
- Overall average to good livestock conditions in the country encourage a normal pastoral lean season in the country, except in some insecure areas where pasture access difficulties will lead to early pasture deterioration in the more secure areas. This phenomenon will negatively affect livestock feeding and lead to a drop in animal production.
- The renewal of restrictions due to the upsurge in COVID-19 cases from March to April exacerbates difficulties for urban households linked to the tourism, transport, trade, and migration sectors, especially in areas with strong links to this activity. The resulting drop in income further reduces their ability to adequately meet their food and non-food needs.
- Stressed (IPC Phase 2) food insecurity for poor households in the insecure areas of Liptako Gourma will escalate to Crisis (IPC Phase 3) from May onwards because of the continued deterioration of their livelihoods in relation to residual insecurity and the impacts of COVID-19. The same will be true for poor displaced households and victims from the floods in July to August 2020.

**CURRENT SITUATION**

*Seasonal progress:* Off-season crop progress continues at an average pace for rice and flood recession crops, with installation and maintenance operations providing employment and food opportunities for poor households in the irrigated areas as well as the lake areas of Tombouctou, Mopti, and Kayes. Production prospects are good overall, thanks to the above-average cultivated area and the corresponding good water levels in ponds and retention lakes. As for market gardening, average to above-average crops are near completion thanks to good water availability, providing average to above-average income for farmers.

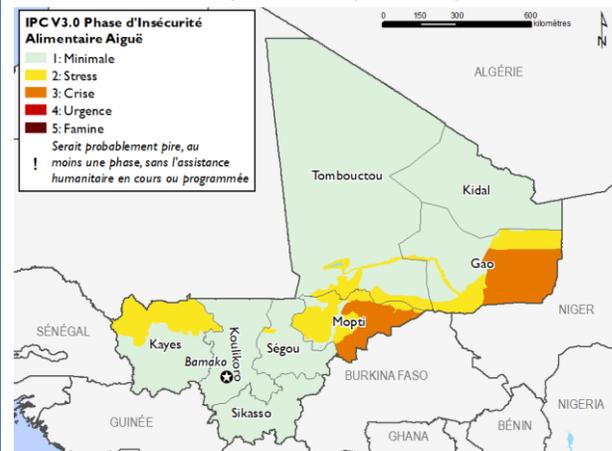
*Pastoral conditions:* Overall average to above-average biomass production and good water source levels point to a smooth pastoral lean season overall across the country. However, difficulties accessing certain routes due to insecurity are causing atypical concentrations in accessible pastures with early depletion in these areas in Ménaka and in the Gourma area of Tombouctou. Significant bush fire damage is reported in the Gourma area of Tombouctou, which reduces fodder availability

Projected food security outcomes, April to May 2021



Source: FEWS NET

Projected food security outcomes, June to September 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.

and negatively affects the feeding of livestock herds. The herds are in the typical dry season areas in the river strip and at permanent water sources. The animal health situation is generally calm and the vaccination campaign continues with the support of humanitarian partners such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the FAO. Animals are in average physical condition. Milk production has experienced its typical drop, thereby reducing its consumption by pastoral households as well as the income from selling milk and by-products such as butter and cheese. The government and some partners have carried out a free distribution campaign of livestock feed. Additionally, the government has set the price of livestock feed at 7,500 FCFA per 50-kg bag to improve household access to this commodity, which is experiencing a sharp decline in availability due to a drop of over 70 percent in cotton production.

*Fishing:* Fish catches are continuing actively on the country's main waterways, with production considered average to good. This provides above-average income thanks to above-average prices. An improvement in catches has been recorded with the lifting of restrictions on waterways and communal fishing in ponds. Additionally, harvests from fish ponds as part of fish farming further improve availability.

*Security situation:* The persistence of security incidents continues to disrupt economic activities in the Liptako Gourma area, in parts of the northern regions, and in the northern Segou region, despite a relative calm observed following inter-community negotiations. Looting of livestock, destruction of property, and restricted field access significantly degrade households' livelihoods and increase their vulnerability to food insecurity. According to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), there were 221 incidents and 562 deaths from January to April 15, 2021, compared to 265 incidents and 1,207 deaths for the same period in 2020. Limited access to basic social services, atypical population displacements estimated at 346,864 displaced persons (64,015 households) at the end of January 2021, and difficulties with humanitarian access are degrading the living conditions of poor households in certain areas, particularly Liptako Gourma.

*COVID-19 situation:* The steady rise in the number of positive COVID-19 cases has led the government to resume restrictive measures such as compulsory wearing of face masks in public, prohibition of gatherings of more than 50 people, closure of all recreational facilities from April 10 to April 25, and suspension of all festivities and other events. These measures will have a negative impact on households operating in these sectors. There were 5,100 active COVID-19 cases as of April 16, 2021, compared to 2,827 active cases on March 31, 2021, showing an increase of 80.4 percent, particularly in the city of Bamako and its surroundings (Kati and Koulikoro cercles), the epicenter of the epidemic. The COVID-19 vaccination campaign started on March 31, 2021, and 26,226 social and healthcare workers, elderly persons over age 60, and chronically ill people had been vaccinated as of April 12, 2021. Decreased income due to COVID-19, with a significant proportion in areas linked to migrant remittances and certain urban centers of the country such as Bamako and its surroundings, Kati, and Koulikoro, negatively affects household food access for nearly 12.5 percent of households, according to the February 2021 National Strategy for Food and Nutrition Security (ENSAN) report.

*Market and prices:* Average to above-average cereal availability, thanks to cereal production that is 9 percent above average, is conducive to adequate market supply in the 2020/2021 food year. Cereal supplies to markets are adequate everywhere despite disruptions that reduce flows in the insecure areas of Liptako Gourma and in parts of the northern regions. Cereal supply is stable compared to last month on the main markets. Cereal prices are stable compared to last month in the main markets of the regional capitals, except in Tombouctou and Ménaka, where they are up by 7 percent and 17 percent respectively. Compared to the five-year average, the price of the main staple cereal in regional capital markets is near average in Koulikoro and Mopti and up 8 percent in Gao; 9 percent in Kayes, Tombouctou, and Segou; 21 percent in Ménaka; and 33 percent in Sikasso.

Despite the relatively favorable price trend, the overall decline in income linked to insecurity and COVID-19 limits the affected poor households' market access.

Livestock markets are generally operating as usual, except in insecure areas where disruptions persist. Prices are at or above the five-year average. Terms of trade for goats and millet compared to the five-year average are near average in Gao (+4 percent) and up 8 percent in Mopti, 13 percent in Ménaka, 18 percent in Rharous, 28 percent in Nara, and 30 percent in Tombouctou, which is generally favorable for pastoral households' market access.

## UPDATED ASSUMPTION

The current situation has not fundamentally affected the assumptions of the most likely [FEWS NET scenario for February to September 2021](#). However, this situation could change due to the delicate COVID-19 situation and the socio-political crisis in Mali. In this context, the following assumption has been developed.

- Developments in the socio-political situation:** Conflicting viewpoints between political stakeholders and civil society on the management of the transitional government and the organization of the next elections is likely to exacerbate discontent within the population. This will generate socio-political instability with negative consequences on households' livelihoods, especially in urban areas, and on the government's ability to respond to social and humanitarian demands. Additionally, the resurgence of COVID-19 cases and associated restrictions will further affect household livelihoods.

## PROJECTED OUTLOOK TO SEPTEMBER 2021

The overall average to above-average food availability in the country, as well as near-average to slightly above-average cereal price trends, are conducive to easy access for most of the country's agropastoral households in this post-harvest period. The poor or borderline food consumption score for 22.5 percent of households, according to the February 2021 ENSAN report, is near the five-year average. The global acute malnutrition rate, which is structurally precarious at 7.2 percent according to the World Health Organization (WHO), indicates a concerning nutritional situation despite favorable food access, which could be explained by other non-food factors. As a result, the current Minimal (IPC Phase 1) food insecurity will continue until late September 2021 for most households in the country.

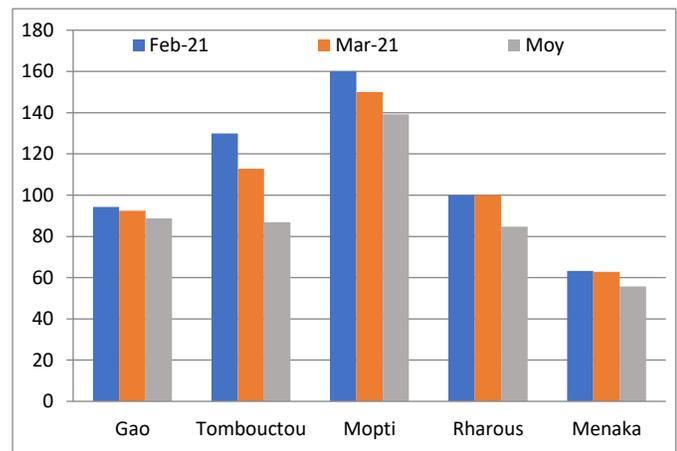
However, in Liptako Gourma, and in some northern parts of the country, poor households are experiencing significant livelihood deterioration and atypical population displacements due to residual insecurity. Early stock depletion due to disruptions in agricultural activities in 2020 has caused an early lean period for poor households in the area. The use of crisis to emergency coping strategies for 6.9 percent of households in Koro, 17.9 percent in Ménaka, 23 percent in Bankass, and 26.1 percent in Rharous in the post-harvest period indicates a critical situation in the area. The current Stressed (IPC Phase 2) food insecurity for households in Liptako Gourma and insecure areas will escalate to Crisis (IPC Phase 3) starting in May 2021 due to the earlier and atypically harsh lean season linked to livelihood deterioration, to September 2021 due to the deterioration of household livelihoods linked to insecurity.

COVID-19 restrictions have reduced economic activities in the country and in migrant-receiving areas. The overall decline in income has reduced poor households' ability to meet their food and non-food needs, particularly in urban centers and areas with high migration rates. The pandemic's gradual spread in the country is not conducive to an adequate resumption of activities. This indicates that certain activities, notably those related to tourism, transport, and trade, will continue to suffer the after-effects of the crisis. Affected poor households will continue to experience Stressed (IPC Phase 2) food insecurity until September 2021. Support from the government and humanitarian partners will provide relief to affected households.

### ABOUT THIS REPORT

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

Figure 1. Term of trade (kg/head) on selected major markets in the country from February to March 2021



Source: FEWS NET