Mali Food Security Outlook Update December 2019

Insecurity in the central part of the country is increasing household vulnerability to food insecurity

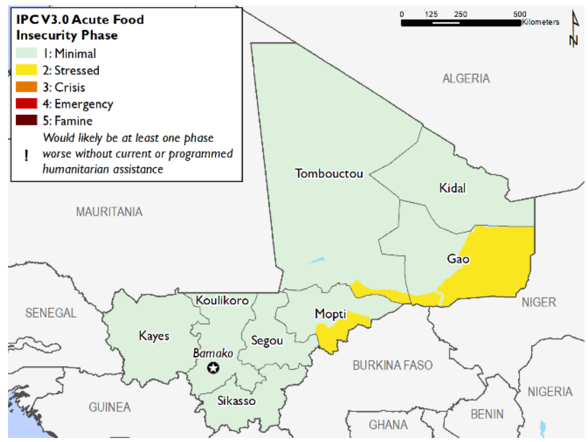
KEY MESSAGES

- The 7.1 percent increase in cereal production compared with 2018/19 and 25.5 percent increase compared with the five-year average allows for average cereal availability in the country during the 2019/20 food year, despite reported pockets of decline in production in the western Sahel and the conflict zones in the central part of the country.

- Households' access to food is assisted by their own production, average income from usual activities, and stable or below-average food prices. As a result, most households in the country will be in Minimal (IPC Phase 1) food insecurity until May 2020.

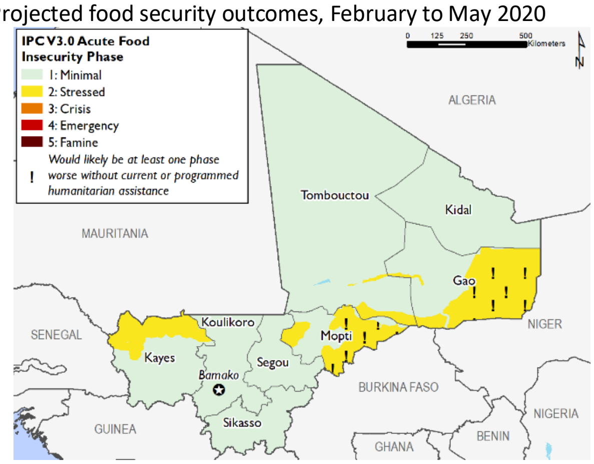
- Early stock depletion as a result of declining agricultural production in the western Sahel and Liptako Gourma regions, in addition to declining livelihoods due to increased conflict and flooding, are leading affected poor households to make atypical use of labor and migration, reduce their non-food expenditure, and rely on humanitarian assistance or relatives to meet their food needs. They will therefore be Stressed (IPC Phase 2) until March and in need of assistance from April to avoid further deterioration of the situation.

Projected food security outcomes, December 2019 to January 2020



Source: *FEWS NET*

Projected food security outcomes, February to May 2020



Source: *FEWS NET*

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CURRENT SITUATION

Agropastoral production

Average to above-average harvests for 88.6 percent of the country's households are under way throughout the country. Cereal production forecasts are 27.5 percent higher than the five-year average and 7.1 percent higher than last season's harvests (Rural Development Sector Planning and Statistics Unit for Mali), despite pockets of poor production particularly in Kayes in the western Sahel due to poor rainfall and in the conflict areas of the Liptako Gourma circles. Outlooks for off-season crops, especially for the market gardening under way, are generally average based on water levels in reservoirs and waterways across the country.

The average to above-average main season harvests and the expected off-season harvests will result in average cereal availability in households and on markets throughout the country during the new consumption year.

The average to excess availability of pasture and water points, particularly in the pastoral areas of the country, bodes well for a generally uneventful pastoral lean season in the country. The physical condition of livestock and the level of livestock production are average overall, which is improving the availability of dairy products (milk, butter, cheese) in this period during which herds are returning as usual in search of crop residues. However, the rapid deterioration that is expected in the western

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Sahel given the lack of biomass and the early descent of Mauritanian herds, as well as disrupted livestock movements in conflict zones and limited access to certain pastures, may adversely affect livestock feeding in concentrated dry-season areas, particularly in bourgou fields and around water points where the lean season may arrive earlier.

Markets and prices

Despite disrupted flows related to insecurity in areas within the central and northern parts of the country, the supply of food to markets is sufficient everywhere due to above-average seasonal increases in supply due to destocking, the arrival of new harvests and the ease of physical access to markets. The seasonal decrease in demand during this period of availability through own harvests and high supply are causing a seasonal drop in prices, which is increasingly being observed in production markets. At the end of November, cereal prices on most of the markets monitored were down or stable compared with October. Compared with the five-year average, the general trend in regional capitals is downward, particularly in the case of millet in Koulikoro (-17 percent), Ségou (-22 percent), Mopti (-20 percent) and Niafunké (-19 percent) and similar in Gao (4 percent), Tombouctou and Kidal (3 percent). These price levels are supporting average household access to food.

Livestock markets are well supplied during this period of transhumant herders returning and of stocks being replenished in pastoralist households that are benefiting from the good livestock/cereals terms of trade. However, demand is negatively affected by insecurity in some markets in the north and the center, leading to unusual flows in some markets in Ségou and Sikasso, with lower prices reducing pastoral incomes. The price of goats – the most common animal sold by poor households – is virtually stable or up compared to the previous month. Compared to the five-year average, it is generally increasing, for example in Mopti and Nara (8 percent), Gao (16 percent), Bourem (14 percent), Gourma-Rharous (23 percent) and similar in Ménaka. As a result, the goat/millet terms of trade are improving at the level of the pastoral markets monitored: by 5 percent in Tombouctou, 11 percent in Gao, 16 percent in Nara, 17 percent in Bourem, and 51 percent in Gourma-Rharous, which is conducive to average household access to food.

Flooding

Heavy rains in July and August caused damage to crops, capital goods, habitats, grain stores and livestock in the regions of Ségou, Koulikoro, Bamako, Tombouctou, Mopti and Kidal. The resulting deterioration in livelihoods is adversely affecting households' ability to adequately meet their livelihood replenishment and food needs, with more than 90,000 people thought to be affected (Directorate-General for Civil Protection, October 2019).

Population movements and insecurity

Unusual population movements are continuing to reflect developments in the security situation, particularly in the Liptako Gourma area, where conflict persists and is extending, despite ongoing military operations. According to the CMP (Commission on Population Movements) report, the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) stood at 199,385 at the end of October. IDPs in camps (Bamako, Ségou) and in host households, where they put pressure on scarce resources, are in need of food assistance and livelihood development.

UPDATED ASSUMPTIONS

The current situation has not affected the assumptions used to develop the FEWS NET Food Security Outlook for October 2019 to May 2020.

PROJECTED OUTLOOK THROUGH MAY 2020

The average to good availability of harvests and the assumption that food prices will be at average to below-average levels are favorable to average household access to food through income from traditional agricultural and non-agricultural labor activities. As a result, most households in the country will find themselves in Minimal (IPC Phase 1) food insecurity from December 2019 through May 2020.

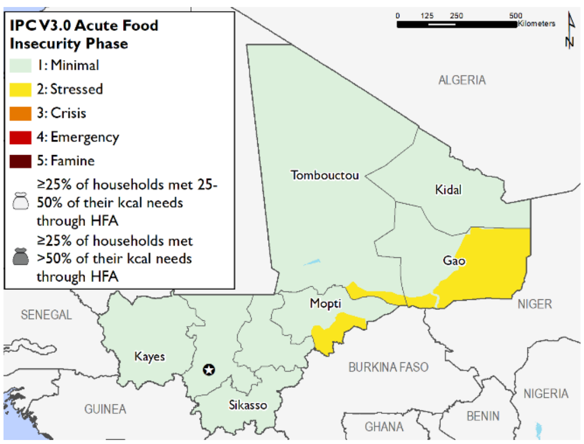
However, early stock depletion due to the significant decline in production caused by inadequate rain and crop pests will create early market dependency among the populations of the Kayes, Nioro and Yélimané circles and in places in the Mopti River band in Gao. These households with relatively average – albeit low – access to food during this harvest period thanks to local solidarity will experience an above-average deterioration in their food consumption and nutritional situation from March onward. Poor households that cannot meet their food needs without atypical migration, borrowing, labor and reducing their non-food expenditure will therefore be Stressed (IPC Phase 2) from March to May 2020.

In insecure areas, particularly in the Liptako Gourma region, poor households with declining incomes (especially those in Bankass, Koro, Bandiagara, Douentza and Ménaka) will experience a marked deterioration in their livelihoods. This will limit their ability to adequately meet their food and non-food needs. From October to March, these households will be Stressed (IPC Phase 2), thanks to their own low harvests, in-kind payments for harvesting, local solidarity and support from the Government and humanitarian agencies. From March, they will experience an above-average deterioration in their food consumption levels. The use of negative coping strategies because of their longer-than-usual market dependency will lead to an early deterioration of food consumption due to difficulties in accessing food and significant livestock losses, making them Stressed with a need for assistance (IPC Phase 2!) from April until May.

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

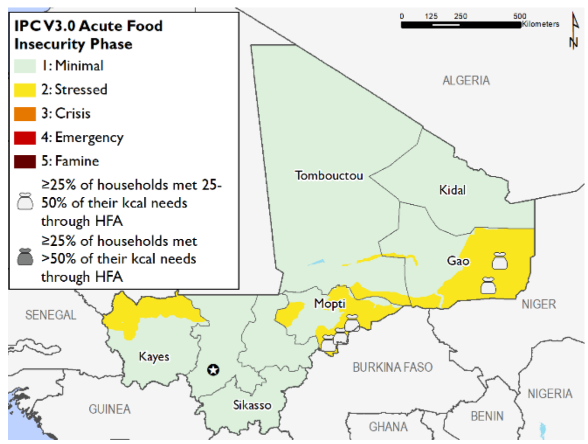
Each of these maps adheres to IPC v3.0 humanitarian assistance mapping protocols and flags where significant levels of humanitarian assistance are being/are expected to be provided. indicates that at least 25 percent of households receive on average 25–50 percent of caloric needs from humanitarian food 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.

Projected food security outcomes, December 2019 to January 2020



Source: *FEWS NET*

Projected food security outcomes, February to May 2020



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