Households in most areas of the country face Stressed (IPC Phase 2) food insecurity due to COVID-19

KEY MESSAGES

- Recent developments in the national political context have led to the reinstatement of measures similar to those intended to reduce the spread of COVID-19, including curfews and border restrictions. This will likely slow down the economic recovery expected when some health restrictions were lifted a month ago.

- Off-season activities are continuing as normal, particularly in Lac. After the berberé harvest was completed at the end of March, producers are concentrating on off-season rice production in the rice basin (Mayo Kebbi Est, Mayo Kebbi Ouest, and Tandjilé), where many are transplanting from nurseries into large fields.

- Given the gradual depletion of their stocks and low incomes limiting their market access, most host and displaced households in Lac would be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) food insecurity without humanitarian assistance. Insecurity in Tibesti and COVID-19-related measures in BEG, Kanem, Ouaddai, Sila, Ennedi, the rice basin, and N’Djaména are driving some poor and very poor households into Stressed (IPC Phase 2) food insecurity. The rest of the country is facing Minimal (IPC Phase 1) food insecurity.

CURRENT SITUATION

Political transition and impacts of COVID-19: Following the death of President Idriss Deby Itno, the Transitional Military Council (TMC) is charged with running the country in the interim. The evening curfew lifted about a month ago was reinstated, as were border closures despite the announcement that they would be reopened. Additionally, traffic and transport restrictions have been imposed, resulting in increased prices for transporting people and goods.

Agricultural situation: Off-season rice and maize activities continue in Lac and Mayo Kebbi in particular.

Agricultural labor: Off-season agricultural activities do not usually generate large amounts of labor. In the rice basin, rice farmers’ financial difficulties and the recent increase in fees for their activity prevent them from cultivating the same areas as in a normal year, causing a slight drop in income from rice labor for poor and very poor households in these areas.

Non-agricultural labor: Given the security and health restrictions in place throughout the country, the decline in employment opportunities recorded for over a year is still being observed.

Pastoral situation: In transhumance areas, the berberé crop residues in the provinces of Ouaddai and Sila contribute to the feeding of herds. With inter-community conflicts causing transhumant herders to favor certain areas considered safer, an abnormal drop in the level of semi-permanent ponds is beginning to be observed in the departments of Assoungha and Ouarra.
in Ouaddai, Biltine and Megri in Wadi Fira, and Goz Beida in Sila. In BEG and Kanem, a normal decrease in pasture is reported in most locations.

**Conflicts and population displacements:** The return of displaced persons to their areas of origin is reported in the Mayo Kebbi provinces following a relative lull in the areas affected by inter-community conflicts. Additionally, several waves of refugees were welcomed into the Chadian territory in recent weeks, particularly from Nigeria, the Central African Republic, and Sudan.

In Lac, more than half of the province’s population is currently made up of displaced persons whose livelihoods are reduced, and the situation remains tense in Tibesti where trade flows continue to be disrupted.

**Household cereal stocks:** Household stocks from the rainy season have increased due to the recent off-season harvests (*berberé*, maize), and most households have near-average stock levels. In structurally deficit areas such as BEG and Kanem, household stocks are being depleted. In Lac, very poor and poor households have no stocks because of the small amount of agricultural land available to them.

**Cereal markets and prices:** The supply of most cereal markets is strengthened by the new *berberé* harvests from the off-season, although there were some disruptions during the election campaign. Supply is also slowing down due to health restrictions, which is mainly reflected in higher transport costs. In Lac, security conditions and health measures are disrupting supplies to local markets.

In Abéché and Biltine, imported food products (pasta and rice) were distributed during the election campaign, which helped stabilize or even reduce demand on the cereal markets. On the other hand, in Bongor, Kélo, and Mongo, increased demand for millet and sorghum compared with the five-year average and the same period in 2020 is reported due to purchases made for election campaign activities. In early April 2021, millet prices were lower than the five-year average in Abéché (-5 percent), Abdi (-13 percent), and Biltine (-6 percent) due to the distributions noted earlier and the halt in exports to Sudan because of border closures. Conversely, millet prices are up compared to the five-year average reported in the Sudanese zone. Millet prices are higher than average in Bongor (25 percent), Pala (23 percent), and Sarh (15 percent) due to increased demand. Similarly, sorghum prices are up in Kélo (40 percent) and Léré (35 percent).

**Livestock markets:** Despite Ramadan celebrations, demand for livestock for export remains lower than normal and is causing oversupply in the livestock markets. These markets therefore show a general decline in prices, except a few, such as Goz Beida and N’Djaména, due to election campaign activities.

**Nutrition:** In February 2021, an increase of over 20 percent in admissions compared to the same period in the last five years was recorded in nutrition units in Lac.

**Current food situation:** Given the low purchasing power of displaced persons and poor and very poor and host households in Lac, these groups have to adopt coping strategies such as reducing the number of meals or selling productive assets to access market food. Humanitarian assistance is likely to be sufficient to improve food security for many households, but FEWS NET lacks current data on the rations distributed. These households would therefore be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) food insecurity without assistance.

Poor and very poor households that depend on the market for their consumption and suffer reduced income due to health restrictions, particularly in BEG, Kanem, Ouaddai, Wadi Fira, Ennedi, Mayo Kebbi (Est and Ouest), and Tandjilé, have limited market access to ensure their food consumption. They have a reduced food consumption of minimal adequacy and are experiencing Stressed (IPC Phase 2) food insecurity. On the other hand, the other provinces of the country are able to cover their basic food needs thanks to residual stocks supplemented in some places by market garden produce and small volume purchases on the markets.

**UPDATED ASSUMPTION**

The assumptions of the most likely FEWS NET scenario for [February to September 2021](#) have changed as follows:

The recent death of President Idriss Deby Itno and the successive creation of a Transitional Military Council (TMC) have led to a significant increase in political instability. While the TMC is likely to consolidate power throughout the proposed 18-month transition leading to the promised elections, sustained popular demonstrations and further rebel offensives are likely to occur in the coming months at higher levels than in previous years. Opposition and civil society groups are likely to call for continued demonstrations, and Chadian rebel groups based in Libya — although recently weakened by a combination of Chadian and French military offensives — are likely to continue opposing the TMC.
Due to seasonal trends and de-escalation efforts by civil society stakeholders and community leaders in the southern region, clashes between breeders and farmers have decreased in frequency and remained at seasonally low levels from February to April 2021. Conflict between breeders and farmers is expected to follow the recent pattern of peaks at the beginning and end of the rainy season — around May 2021 and October 2021 respectively — when breeders move their herds in response to seasonal changes.

**PROJECTED OUTLOOK TO SEPTEMBER 2021**

Without food assistance, very poor and poor households in Lac would have to resort to Crisis strategies, such as reducing the number of meals, prioritizing consumption for women and children, and host households selling productive assets, or would have food deficits and therefore face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) food insecurity. Assistance is likely to continue improving the food situation in Lac throughout the projection period, but FEWS NET currently lacks data to confirm this.

Due to increased insecurity at the Chadian-Libyan borders and the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, Tibesti will face a decline in the volume of food imports. Households in the area and in Borkou will have limited market access due to low income levels and will face Stressed (IPC Phase 2) food insecurity.

Very poor and poor households in BEG, Kanem, Wadi Fira, and Ouaddai will have market access for their consumption, while their stocks will be gradually depleted. Very poor and poor households in these areas will not be able to afford some essential non-food expenses and will be in Stressed (IPC Phase 2) food insecurity.

Despite declining household stocks and low incomes from labor, migration, and remittances, most households in other provinces of the country (Moyen Chari, Salamat, and Sila) will be able to cover their basic food and non-food needs through market gardening and other off-season products such as berberé in Mayo Kebbi and Guéra without resorting to coping strategies. They will face Minimal (IPC Phase 1) food insecurity.

**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](#).