

Flooding and landslides due to heavy rainfall result in atypical food insecurity

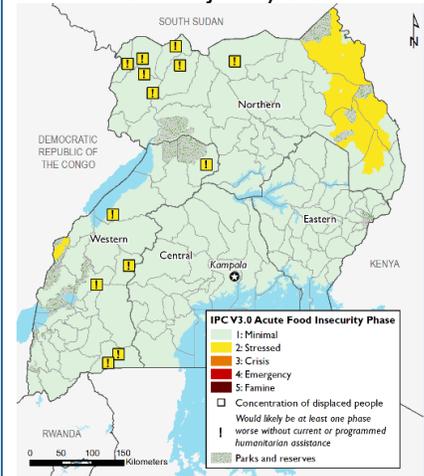
KEY MESSAGES

- In bimodal areas, well above-average second season rainfall from October to December has led to favorable crop production overall, with most areas in Minimal (IPC Phase 1). However, torrential rainfall has also led to localized flooding and landslides in mountainous areas of eastern and western Uganda. In the worst affected Bundibugyo district, Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes are now prevalent, with some households expected to face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes by February as a result of lost assets and damage to livelihoods. Continued heavy rainfall, expected through the end of December, is likely to cause additional flooding and landslides.
- In Karamoja, food security conditions are improving overall, though Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes remain widespread. Availability of labor opportunities is supporting access to income, with favorable firewood-to-sorghum and charcoal-to-sorghum terms of trade supporting access to food through market purchases. Stressed outcomes are expected through at least May 2020, though an increasing number of poor households will begin to face worse outcomes with the start of the lean season in March.
- Seasonally-declining staple food prices between October and November are supporting normal access to food overall, though prices remain above average and higher than last year’s levels. This is attributed to disrupted replenishment of market supplies following the harvest, as heavy rainfall has delayed drying and caused poor road conditions that have increased transport costs from surplus production areas.
- According to UNHCR/OPM, 11,243 new refugees arrived in Uganda in November. The arrival rate from DRC remained steady between October and November, while the arrival rate from South Sudan declined slightly. Uganda now hosts a total 1,373,512 refugees and asylum seekers, an estimated 88 percent of whom receive humanitarian food assistance. Ongoing assistance supplemented by seasonal harvests for some households is expected to support Stressed! (IPC Phase 2!) outcomes through January, with Crisis (IPC Phase 3) expected between February and May in the absence of assistance.

CURRENT SITUATION

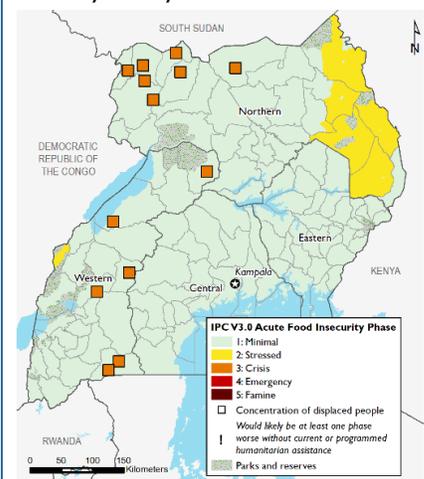
Heavy rainfall ranging between 150-300 mm above average levels throughout most of the country (Figure 1) has been received during the October to December second bimodal cropping season, with this period being ranked as one of the wettest on record. While this has been largely beneficial for crop production and pasture conditions in most of bimodal Uganda and Karamoja, torrential rainfall over the past several weeks has resulted in flooding and landslides that have affected the livelihoods of over 300,000 people according to OCHA. Typically, second-season rainfall subsides between late November and early December in bimodal Uganda. However, current forecasts point to the likelihood of above-average rainfall throughout most of December.

Projected food security outcomes, December 2019 to January 2020



Source: FEWS NET

Projected food security outcomes, February to May 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.

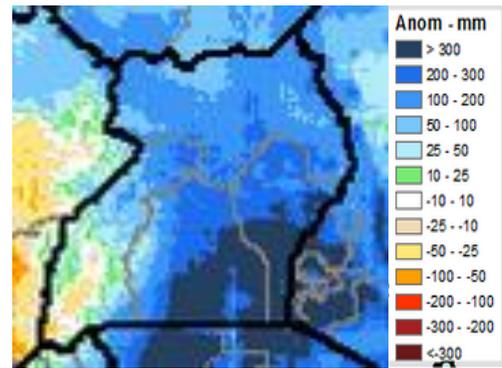
In most bimodal areas, significantly above-average rainfall has been continuous since an atypically early start to the season in June/July. This favored early planting and supported favorable crop development, resulting in early availability of the green/dry harvest in November. Given delayed first-season harvests in most areas except parts of the western region, stocks from the first-season harvest generally lasted until the availability of the second-season green harvest. As a result, typical seasonal food shortages did not manifest in most areas. Second season harvests were likely average to above-average in most bimodal areas, expected to be maintaining stable food security conditions and Minimal (IPC Phase 1) outcomes. Furthermore, widespread availability of above-average pasture and water resources in the rangelands has led to above-average livestock body conditions and good productivity of meat and milk in the Cattle Corridor districts. As a result of above-average production, milk supply exceeded demand, leading to atypically depressed prices and reduced income from milk sales. Both intensive and free-range livestock production systems have flourished since October.

However, torrential rainfall has also led to localized flooding and landslides. These disasters have damaged crops and infrastructure, displaced an estimated 65,000 households, and caused at least 38 deaths. According to a December 19 update from OCHA, over 300,000 people have been affected in total, with worst impacts due to landslides in mountainous areas including Bundibugyo and Ntoroko districts in the western Rwenzururu sub-region, and Katakwi, Kumi, and Bukedea districts in the eastern Teso sub-region. Other affected areas include the eastern Bugisu, Bukedi, and Elgon sub-regions, and western Kasese. In the areas worst affected by landslides, thousands of households have been displaced or have otherwise lost their typical means of accessing food and income. Many are facing significant crop losses, reducing both food availability from own-consumption and access to income from sales. In Bundibugyo, the worst affected District, widespread loss of livestock and destruction of seasonal food and cash crops – including cocoa, coffee, and vanilla – has significantly reduced access to both food and income. Furthermore, damage to infrastructure including water systems and reduced access to health services is resulting in increased concerns over sanitation and health. As a result, this normally food secure population is now facing minimally adequate food consumption and is unable to meet some essential non-food needs, with Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes likely in the absence of adequate assistance. Households are currently relying on support from relatives, well-wishers, and small amounts of government food assistance.

Areas worst affected by flooding include the border town of Elegu in northern Uganda and areas surrounding the Lake Victoria Basin, Lake Kyoga, and Nile River tributaries. In these areas, flooding has resulted in displacements, waterlogging of crops, and destruction of property and infrastructure. In other parts of the country, the impact of the heavy rainfall has generally been restricted to significant damage to roads and bridges in both rural and urban areas, as well as increased post-harvest losses due to poor crop drying conditions. Damage to roads and bridges has disrupted the movement of people and commodities, delaying replenishment of market stocks following the second season bimodal harvest. Meanwhile, ongoing rainfall and the below-average number of sunshine days are delaying post-harvest activities including gathering, drying, and storing of crops. Farmers are experiencing both pre- and post-harvest crop losses in affected areas, with some reports of poorly dried pulses – especially beans – germinating or rotting. As a result, post-harvest losses are likely to be above average. Though an average to above-average harvest is still expected, the total production of beans and groundnuts is likely to be below average. Furthermore, the high moisture content of newly harvested pulses and cereals is resulting in poor quality supplies on the market.

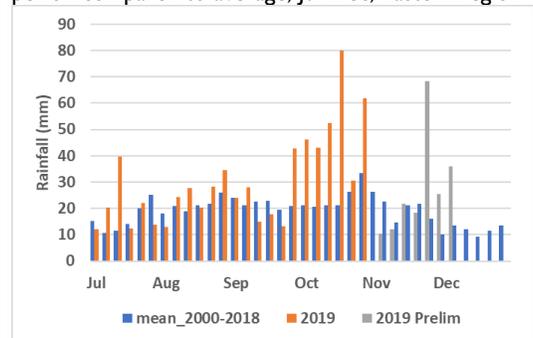
In Karamoja, above-average rainfall during the harvest season also disrupted the drying of mature crops and caused pre- and post-harvest losses, especially in Kotido and Kaabong where the harvests occurred latest. Throughout Karamoja, this also limited the collection and sale of firewood and charcoal. However, the increased rainfall has supported fishing activities and rudimentary gold and sand mining, while increasing the availability of wild vegetables. The improved availability of

Figure 1. CHIRPS-prelim rainfall accumulation anomaly in mm compared to 1981-2010 mean, October 1-December 15, 2019



Source: FEWS NET/ USGS

Figure 2. Rainfall distribution in mm per five-day period compared to average, Jul-Dec, Eastern region



Source: FEWS NET/USGS

pasture and water resources is supporting favorable livestock body conditions and milk production, though above-average milk production is depressing prices. Livestock migrations that typically occur in November/December have been delayed or may not happen at all this year. However, Foot and Mouth Disease remains prevalent in highly susceptible districts like Sembabule and Kotido, where a quarantine on livestock movement has been reinstated only a few months after having been lifted. Though this may disrupt trade, livestock sales are not an important source of income for most poor households in Karamoja during this time of year. Overall, the increased availability of food and income coupled with declining sorghum prices is supporting Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes.

Figure 3. Staple retail prices in November 2019 as a percent of the 2014 – 2018 average, in various markets



Source: Farmgain/WFP

Supplies from the early bimodal harvests have resulted in some seasonal declines in staple food prices. However, these declines have been less pronounced than usual. This is attributed to increased transport costs resulting from flooding and the consequent destruction of rural roads, as well as disruption of post-harvest activities that have delayed full replenishment of market stocks. In November, prices of most staple foods remained significantly higher than prices in November of last year. Between October and November, bean retail prices decreased by 6-20 percent in Kampala, Masindi, Mubende, and Tororo, and remained stable in Arua, Lira, Gulu, and Soroti. These decreases are mainly attributed to the increased availability following harvests. Sorghum retail prices were generally stable between October and November in most bimodal area markets, though in Gulu and Kampala they increased by 11 percent. In all markets, November sorghum prices were 14-104 percent higher than prices recorded last year. Maize retail prices were mostly stable countrywide except in Lira, Gulu, and Mubende where they increased between 11-15 percent between October and November. Maize prices were 11-41 percent higher than prices observed last year, and 12-21 percent higher than the five-year average. Maize prices have atypically increased since September, due to low market supply as a result of poor drying conditions. Similarly, prices of cassava chips significantly increased by 22-60 percent between October and November in all markets, attributed to the same causes.

According to UNHCR/OPM, Uganda now hosts over 1,373,512 refugees and asylum seekers, mostly from DRC and South Sudan. Arrival rates in 2019 have remained significantly below projected levels. Average daily arrival rates from DRC were stable between October and November at 130 per day, while those from South Sudan declined from an average of 70 per day in October to an average of 46 per day in November. On average, 88 percent of refugees currently receive humanitarian food assistance according to September estimates by UNHCR/GOU, with an estimated 68 percent of people receiving in-kind food assistance and 32 percent receiving cash transfers. This provision of humanitarian food assistance continues to sustain Stressed! (IPC Phase 2!) outcomes among refugee populations. Among refugees who planted during the second season, this assistance is currently being supplemented with small quantities of food from green and dry harvests of beans, maize, and seasonal vegetables. However, some plots located in the lowlands also experienced waterlogging and poor crop performance following the above-average rainfall received in the settlement areas.

PROJECTED OUTLOOK THROUGH MAY 2020

In bimodal areas, above-average rainfall is expected to continue throughout most of December, with additional rainfall possible in early 2020 according to current global climate forecasts. As a result, further flooding and landslides are likely in late December and January 2020. Overall, harvests of cereals, pulses and annual crops are expected to be average to above-average in most bimodal areas. In areas worst impacted by flooding and landslides – including Teso, Bugisu, Bukedi, and Elgon sub-regions in eastern Uganda and parts of Bundibugyo, Ntoroko, and Kasese districts in the west – crop production is likely to be below average, with some households experiencing losses of livestock, property, and other assets. In worst affected Bundibugyo district, households face damage to food and income sources, assets, and livelihoods – including destruction of crop/grazing land that will impact the next season’s production. Below-average seasonal income is expected to be inadequate for households to meet all essential non-food needs, with limited ability to engage in normal first season (March-May) agricultural activities likely. Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes are likely to persist through at least May 2020, with worse outcomes likely to emerge among the poorest and worst-affected households.

Average to above-average second-season harvests are expected to sustain Minimal (IPC Phase 1) outcomes through at least May 2020 in most bimodal areas. While household food stocks are expected to be normal overall, allowing households to access seasonal income from crop sales, high post-harvest losses in some areas will result in reduced stocks for affected

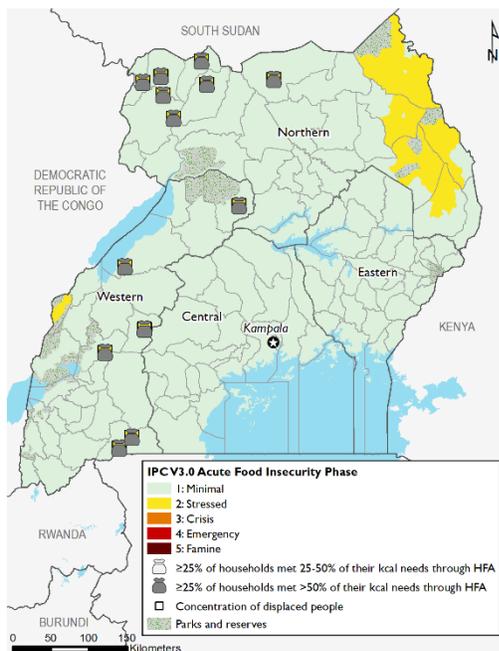
households. Additionally, damage to root crops like cassava, sweet potatoes, and ground nuts in heavily saturated soils is likely. In Karamoja, Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes are expected to prevail through at least May 2020 following improvements in food consumption supported by seasonal, below-average income from crop sales and below-average staple food prices. Harvests of long-cycle sorghum and bulrush millet are expected to be completed by January, further improving food security especially in Kaabong.

While some refugees are expected to access food from own production, stocks are not expected to last more than one and a half months. Meanwhile, other refugee households will likely supplement food assistance with meagre food purchases, enabled through coping strategies such as borrowing or diverting funds meant for investment in livelihoods. Planned and likely humanitarian food assistance is expected to sustain Stressed! (IPC Phase 2!) outcomes among refugee populations through January 2020. Between February and May, food security outcomes are likely to deteriorate due to anticipated funding shortfalls and ration cuts of up to 50 percent. As a result, many households will experience food consumption gaps and Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are likely.

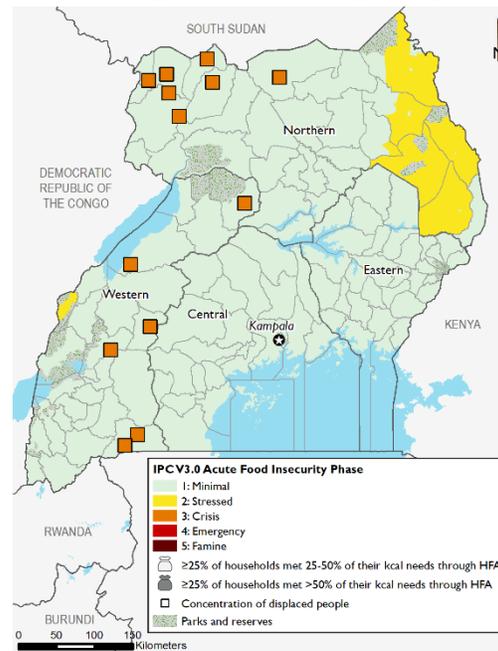
MOST LIKELY FOOD SECURITY OUTCOMES AND AREAS RECEIVING SIGNIFICANT LEVELS OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE*

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



Projected food security outcomes, February to May 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.

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 our work [here](#).