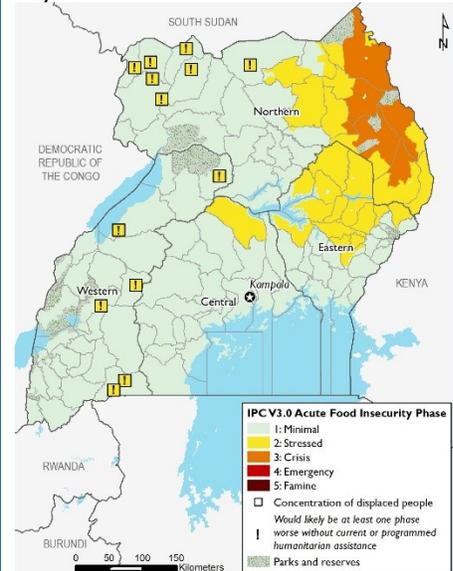


*Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes emerge in bimodal regions*

**KEY MESSAGES**

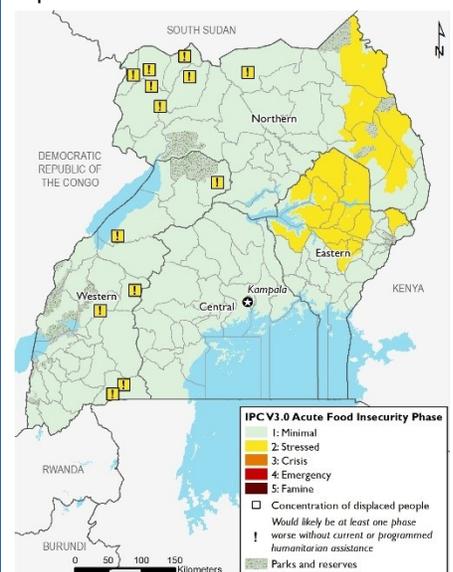
- Food security has deteriorated in bimodal eastern Uganda, resulting in Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes in much of Eastern region and parts of Northern and Central regions. Poor households exhausted their food stocks in March, and below-average first season (March-June) rainfall has led to an absence of seasonal vegetables and a significant decline in agricultural labor demand, reducing household income and food access more significantly than previously anticipated. Food prices are expected to rise, and could remain high even after the harvest. In Teso sub-region, this will be the third consecutive below-average production season. As a result, Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes are likely through September.
- In Karamoja, an increasing number of households face food consumption gaps or are utilizing negative livelihoods coping strategies, increasing the prevalence of Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes. Food prices are steadily rising in comparison to March 2018, with higher price increases occurring in more remote, rural markets. At the same time, the casual labor wage and the price of firewood, charcoal, and goats are declining, resulting in significantly below-average terms of trade and reduced household purchasing power. In addition, most households have delayed land preparation and planting, due to delayed and below-average seasonal (April-September) rainfall coupled with poor access to seeds.
- First season cereal and legume harvests will be delayed until the end of July and aggregate production is expected to be at least 50 percent below average. Delayed and below-average cumulative rainfall has either delayed planting by at least six weeks or resulted in moisture stress, reducing production prospects. May rainfall is forecast to be above average, but will occur too late in the season to support late-maturing crops. Heightened FAW incidence is also likely to contribute to deficits. Below-average production is expected to reduce household food and income sources, cause a rise in staple food prices, and reduce exports.
- The number of South Sudanese and Congolese refugees in Uganda reached 808,554 and 332,506, respectively, as of March 31, inclusive of 19,455 and 19,807 new arrivals, respectively, in the first quarter of 2019. An average arrival rate of at least 200 people per day has been sustained since January and is likely to continue, driven by conflict. Refugees with an arable plot have similarly delayed planting due to below-average rainfall and are expected to harvest less than usual. The proportion of refugees relying entirely on humanitarian food assistance is expected to increase with own food production shortfalls. Stressed! (IPC Phase 2!) outcomes will likely be sustained.

Projected food security outcomes, April to May 2019



Source: FEWS NET

Projected food security outcomes, June to September 2019



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.

**CURRENT SITUATION**

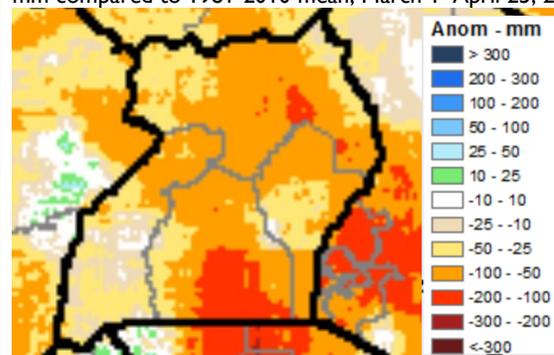
The March-June rains have been late, poorly distributed, and significantly below average. Current deficits range from -25 to more than -200 millimeters (mm), which is less than 55 to 85 percent of normal (Figure 1). In the center-north of the country, the period of March 1<sup>st</sup> to April 20<sup>th</sup> was one of the top three driest periods on record, with many northern areas experiencing a delayed onset of 10 to more than 40 days. In southern Uganda and parts of central and eastern Uganda, a false start of season in late February/early March subsided into a long, severe dry spell lasting at least six weeks, immediately after farmers had planted (Figure 2). Drier-than-normal conditions were driven in large part by Tropical Cyclone Idai in southern Africa. Light to moderate rainfall generally did not begin until the second week of April, while current increase in rainfall activity has improved crop conditions in central and eastern Uganda.

Poor March-April rainfall performance has interrupted seasonal agricultural activities and cut the normal growing period in half. Severe moisture deficits exceeding 100 mm, coupled with land surface temperatures three to eight C° above average, delayed planting and caused widespread germination failure or withering and drying up of early-planted crops. Normally, crops would have attained 15-45 percent growth by this point in the season, reaching the advanced vegetative to early reproductive stages. Although below-average rainfall in April prompted farmers to plant or re-plant, these activities are sporadic due to the rains' uneven spatial and temporal distribution. Late-planted and late-maturing crops are unlikely to attain physiological maturity by the end of the season. Some parts of the southwest have received relatively more rain, but crop performance is also poor to average in these areas, characterized by poor flowering, stunting, and less vigor. In a rapid field assessment by FEWS NET in mid-April, Fall Army Worm (FAW) infestation was observed on the early vegetative maize crop in about three of every five maize fields in central districts and isolated parts of eastern Uganda. FAW is known to thrive in below-average rainfall conditions and is already damaging maize foliage.

Given the impact on crop production, there are significantly below-normal opportunities for agriculture labor. As a result, many poor households are engaging in stressed consumption and livelihoods coping strategies to meet their minimum food needs, due to reduced income to purchase food. Further, the availability of seasonal vegetables is limited, which normally supplements food sources, especially during the lean season. This is most severe in Karamoja region, where alternative livelihoods are limited and Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes already exist. Although the unimodal season begins later, in April, Karamoja also experienced a delayed or false rainfall onset. Rainfall was 10 to 30 days late in most areas, causing most farmers to delay ploughing and planting activities. In parts of southern Karamoja, a false onset in early March prompted some farmers to plant, but these crops dried up due to water stress and farmers have limited capacity to replant.

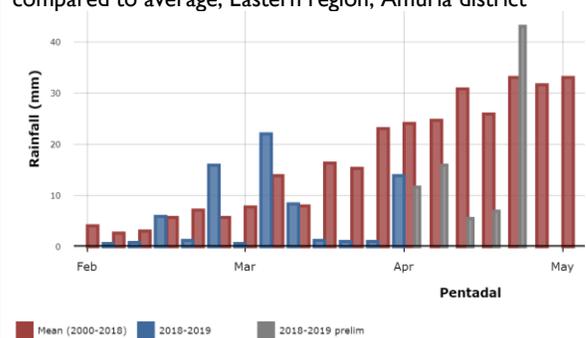
Pasture and water availability for livestock and water availability for human consumption are below-average, according to field reports and indicated by the Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) (Figure 3). Teso, Lango, and Karamoja sub-regions, as well as select districts like Nakansongola and Ntoroko, are worst affected. Livestock body conditions and productivity are consequently below-average. Some slow pasture and water recovery is now occurring in some areas due to sporadic, light to heavy rainfall since April 20<sup>th</sup>. In anticipation of the start of agricultural activities in Acholi and Lango, some livestock from Karamoja, which had migrated to these dry season grazing areas, were driven out back to their home *kraals*

**Figure 1.** CHIRPS-prelim rainfall accumulation anomaly in mm compared to 1981-2010 mean, March 1–April 25, 2019



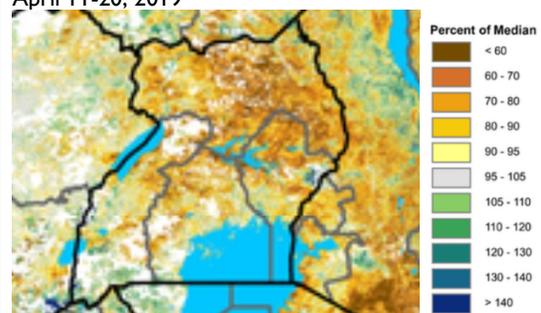
Source: FEWS NET/USGS

**Figure 2.** Rainfall accumulation in mm per five-day period compared to average, Eastern region, Amuria district



Source: FEWS NET/USGS

**Figure 3.** eMODIS percent of median (2003-2017) NDVI, April 11-20, 2019



Source: FEWS NET/USGS

before they could benefit from increased rainfall in those sub-regions. In Karamoja, the combined pressure on pasture and water resources by local herds plus herds that have in-migrated from Turkana is quickly exhausting the few resources that remain. Pasture deterioration has also been exacerbated by traditional burning practices during the dry season.

In March, the price of most staple foods slightly increased across main bi-modal markets but remained near or below the five-year average (Figures 4 and 5). However, despite generally favorable food prices, below-average incomes are constraining food access in areas of concern. Maize retail prices remained near the five-year average, but rose above the 2018 and February averages. Beans traded near average compared to the five-year, 2018, and February averages. In Soroti, a reference market for Teso sub-region, the retail price of cassava, sorghum, sweet potatoes and millet remained below the 2018 average, but beans and rice increased by 10-20 percent. Notably, the price of cassava chips significantly declined by 48 and 41 percent below the 2018 and five-year averages, respectively. At this point in the season, observed price changes are normal and attributed to seasonal increases in domestic demand for consumption and seed.

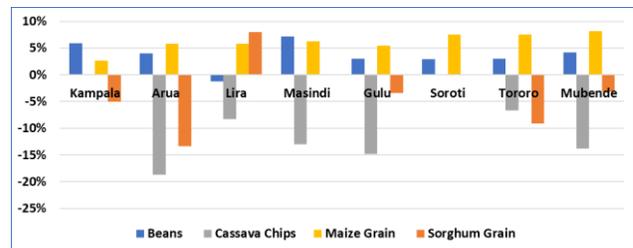
In Karamoja, sorghum prices displayed mixed trends in March compared to the five-year average, with increases observed in Nakapiripirit and Kaabong and decreases in Moroto and Napak. However, prices significantly increased by 18-72 percent compared to March 2018, except in Kaabong where prices remained stable. In comparison to February, sorghum prices sharply increased by 16 and 65 percent in Kotido and Nakapiripirit, respectively, but remained stable in Moroto, Napak, and Kaabong. The availability of low-priced, surplus sorghum from aggregate bimodal production in 2018 has continued to supply Karamoja markets, keeping prices below the five-year average. However, limited income opportunities restrict poor households from making sufficient food purchases. Further, the price of firewood and charcoal and the casual labor wage has significantly declined compared to February and the March 2018 and five-year averages, reducing household purchasing power.

Maize and sorghum export volumes to Kenya have rapidly declined in the first quarter of 2019 and are expected to continue to decline, due to high domestic demand. In the first quarter of 2019, Uganda’s maize exports to Kenya declined 90 percent compared to the preceding quarter and by 96 percent compared to the 2018 first quarter and five-year average. Sorghum exports to Kenya were also below average. However, sorghum exports to South Sudan increased 188 and 211 percent above the 2018 first quarter and five-year average. Meanwhile, bean exports to South Sudan and Kenya were 75 and 212 percent above 2018, respectively, and 125 and 100 percent above the five-year averages, respectively. Given the ongoing border closure, exports to Rwanda declined by 52 and 60 percent with respect to the last quarter and five-year averages, respectively.

As a result of the above factors, Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes persist among poor households in Karamoja, primarily in Kotido, Moroto, and Kaabong districts but increasingly in Nakapiripirit and Abim. In a FEWS NET field assessment in April, poor households widely reported one meal per day for adults, which is typical in the lean season, but with heavy reliance on wild edible leaves and brew dregs mixed with maize or cassava flour. As declining terms of trade and seasonally low household income increasingly constrain access to food, consumption gaps are widening and the prevalence of acute malnutrition is rising. However, worse acute malnutrition outcomes are being mitigated by ongoing WFP supplementary feeding, school feeding, and mother-to-child nutrition programs. In addition to Karamoja, reduced agricultural labor opportunities, little to no availability of seasonal vegetables, and the exhaustion of food stocks from the previous harvest in eastern and northeastern Uganda has led to an increase in the population size experiencing Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes. Areas of concern that are Stressed (IPC Phase 2) include northern districts in Eastern region, eastern districts in Northern region, and Nakasangola district in Central region.

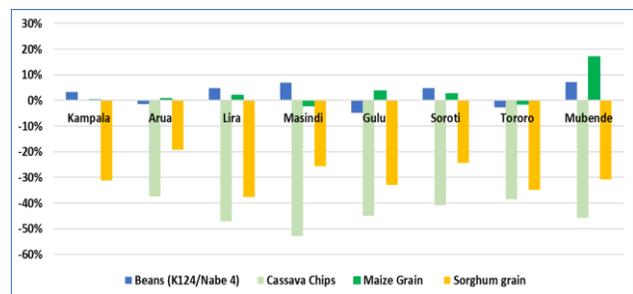
As of March 31, Uganda hosted a total of 1,239,912 refugees and asylum-seekers, including 16,800 who arrived in March and 17,100 who arrived in February. Most refugees continue to originate from South Sudan and DRC, which account for 65 and 27 percent, respectively, of the refugee population. Refugees continue to receive a full ration of food through WFP, which

**Figure 4.** Percentage change in staple foods prices in bimodal reference markets from February 2019 to March 2019



Source: Farmgain/WFP

**Figure 5.** Staple food prices as a percent of the 2014 – 2018 average in bimodal markets, March 2019



Source: Farmgain/WFP

maintains Stressed! (IPC Phase 2!) outcomes. However, below-average rainfall has equally affected refugees in their settlement locations. Most households have had to delay planting, presenting the risk that late-maturing crops whose growing period has been significantly reduced will not physiologically mature.

## UPDATED ASSUMPTIONS

Revisions to assumptions used to develop the most likely scenario for the [Uganda Food Security Outlook for February to September 2019](#) include:

- According to the NOAA/CPC forecast, cumulative first season rainfall in bimodal Uganda (March to June) is now most likely to be below average, despite a short-term forecast of above-average rainfall amounts from May to June.
- Based on the revised forecast, reduced growing period, and crop growth to date, first season bimodal production of cereals and legumes is most likely to be at least 50 percent below average. Green harvests are likely to be delayed until July/August. Given delayed planting and anticipated below-average production, agricultural labor demand is expected to be below average through August and to resume normally during second season activities.
- Given that a tendency to thrive in below-average rainfall conditions, Fall Army Worm (FAW) incidence is likely to be higher than previously expected and may be comparable to the levels present in March-May 2017. This will contribute to projected aggregate production deficits.
- In Karamoja, the delayed onset of the unimodal (April-September) rainfall season and limited household access to seeds is expected to delay the harvest to September and to result in below-average production.
- Pasture and water resources in cattle corridor districts are likely to remain below average through June, given the current slow pace of recovery. Consequently, livestock body conditions and productivity are expected to be below normal.
- Based on the likelihood of significantly below-average production, increased domestic demand is expected to cause staple food prices to rise through the remainder of the scenario period. Price increases are likely to be highest in Teso and Karamoja sub-regions.
- The likelihood of below-average cereal production and rising prices is likely to reduce maize volume exports to Kenya, with the latter likely to increase competitive imports from Tanzania and Zambia. Prolonged border restrictions are also expected to sustain the reduction in export volumes to Rwanda. Exports to South Sudan, however, are still expected to increase but at lower levels than previously expected, due to the anticipated rise in cost of Ugandan food commodities.
- According to WFP, the value of cash-based assistance to refugees is likely to proportionally increase to account for the anticipated increase in the retail price of staple food commodities.

## PROJECTED OUTLOOK THROUGH SEPTEMBER 2019

In bimodal areas, Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes are expected to be sustained in areas of concern through September, accompanied by a more widespread increase in the number of households that are Stressed (IPC Phase 2). Although rainfall forecasts are indicative of above-average rainfall in May-June period, rainfall typically begins to subside in June in south-central Uganda. As a result of the significantly shortened growing period, only crops that mature in a sixty-day period are likely to reach maturity, while most cereal and legume varieties that mature in 90-140 days are likely not to reach maturity. Further, area planted/replanted is expected to be below-normal, since farmers will weigh the risk of planting against the odds of rainfall performance. Quality seed for replanting is also likely to be a constraint. Combined with increased FAW prevalence, a deficit of at least 50 percent is anticipated to affect aggregate seasonal production. Further, the arrival of the green and dry harvests to end the current lean season is expected to be delayed to June and late July, respectively. However, since rainfall tends to continue through the end of June in northern Uganda, above-average rainfall in June would be more beneficial to crop development there. In cattle corridor districts, May and June rainfall is likely to support partial recovery of rangeland resources, but below-average livestock production is likely to place some households in Stressed (IPC Phase 2) until the start of second season rains.

Due to anticipated production shortfalls, it is expected that poor households will exhaust household food stocks one-two months earlier than usual, and will intensify consumption and livelihoods coping strategies after August/September. In Teso sub-region, where this will be the third consecutive below-average production season, poor households will be heavily reliant on food purchases through September even as household income declines, and will be susceptible to engaging in negative livelihoods coping strategies. Although current staple food prices in Teso indicate stable seasonal trends between March and

February, price increases are likely from May onward, which is expected to further limit food access. The absence of seasonal vegetables, reduced fish availability, and below-average income will drive Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes, while some poor households may deteriorate to Crisis (IPC Phase 3).

In Karamoja, household food gaps are expected to widen until the peak of the lean season in May/June, driven by limited income-earning opportunities and rising staple food prices. Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes will persist as food access continues to decline, driven by rising food prices and reduced household income. Households are expected to cope with limited food availability and access, by intensifying sales of firewood, charcoal, grass, and building poles and their engagement in brewing, stone quarrying, and sand mining, but supply of these commodities and labor may exceed demand. As a result, the prevalence of acute malnutrition is expected to deteriorate, driven by decreased food intake and increased morbidity. Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are likely to subside to Stressed (IPC Phase 2) in the July to September period, as increased May-June rainfall will improve agricultural labor demand, livestock-related income-earning opportunities, and seasonal mining opportunities in open streams/rivers. However, delayed and below-average bimodal production will affect market supplies in the Karamoja sub-region, sustaining higher food commodity prices until at least August. Given rainfall performance to date, the green and dry harvests are expected to be delayed to August/September and are likely to be below average. Recovery of pasture and water resources is also expected to be slower than normal and livestock production is likely to remain below average. As a result, although improvement to Stressed (IPC Phase 2) is expected within this outlook period, some poor households may remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) and long-term food security is likely to again decline in the post-harvest period.

Given that refugee populations are expected to receive full rations through at least May, Stressed! (IPC Phase 2!) outcomes are likely to be sustained. Although planned levels of food assistance are not fully funded through September, WFP does not intend to cut rations. Given the expectation of below-average harvests, however, this supplementary food source will be exhausted earlier than usual. As a result, households are expected to be even more reliant on humanitarian food assistance than usual. To compensate for anticipated food price increases, WFP plans to increase the value of the cash-based assistance. However, in a worst-case scenario where rations are significantly cut, Crisis! (IPC Phase 3!) outcomes would be likely after June.

## EVENTS THAT MIGHT CHANGE THE OUTLOOK

**Table I.** Possible events over the next six months that could change the most-likely scenario.

Area	Event	Impact on food security outcomes
National, bimodal areas	Above-average, sustained rainfall through the end of June that is fairly distributed in space and timing	Production shortfalls in first season production would be reduced to about 30 percent and would likely mitigate staple food price increases. The population of poor households experiencing Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes in Teso sub-region would decline, as would the number of poor households in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) located in “hot spots” in current areas of concern.
Karamoja region	Well-distributed May to September rainfall that supports long-cycle sorghum	Though the availability of green harvests would still be delayed, the magnitude of production deficits would be more moderate and would generally restore food stocks by September/October. The proportion of the population in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) in the July to September period would decline, and there would be improved longer-term prospects for food stocks to last into January/February. Food price increase would also be mitigated, due to local availability.
DRC and South Sudanese refugee settlements	Shortfalls in food assistance funding resulting in significant ration cuts from June to September	Ration cuts of 50 percent or more would likely result in Crisis! (IPC Phase 3!) outcomes by August or earlier. New refugee arrivals without access to own production or other established livelihood strategies would face food gaps and turn to crisis and emergency coping strategies. Refugees with access to own production would likely deplete first season food stocks by the end of August or earlier and turn to crisis coping strategies.

### ABOUT THIS UPDATE

This monthly report covers current conditions as well as changes to the projected outlook for food insecurity in this country. It updates FEWS NET’s quarterly Food Security Outlook. Learn more about our work [here](#).