



Issue 17 | March 2015

Global Food Security Update

TRACKING FOOD SECURITY TRENDS IN VULNERABLE COUNTRIES

The Global Food Security Update provides a quarterly overview of key food security trends in vulnerable countries. Information is provided by WFP VAM field teams and partners.

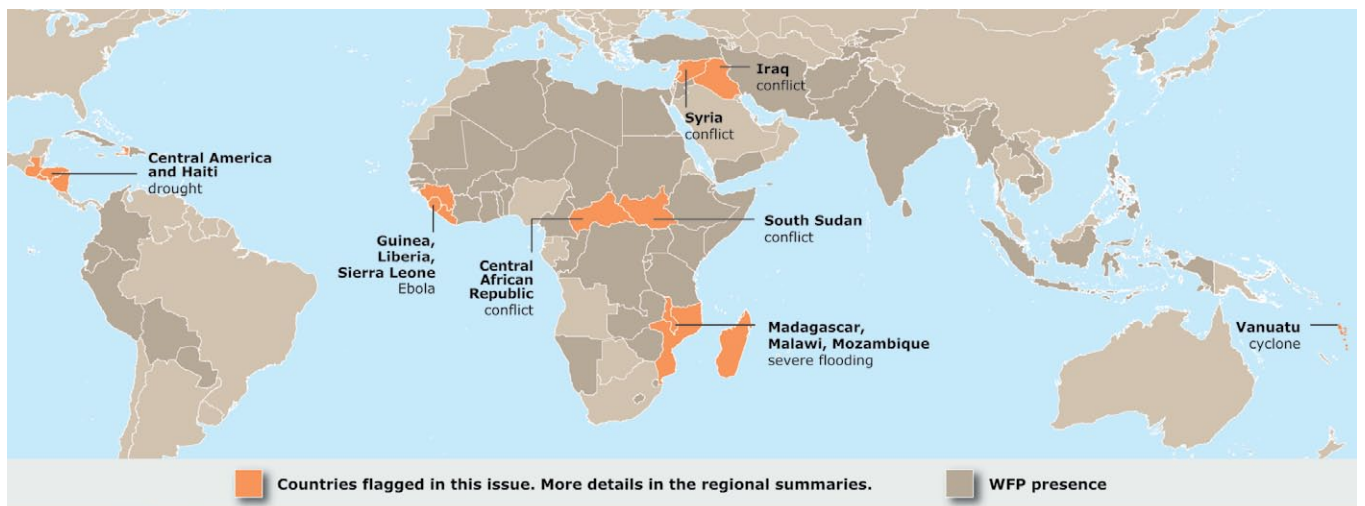
In focus

- Conflict in **Iraq** has disrupted food markets, leading to price hikes in Anbar, Salah Al-Din and Kirkuk. According to the 2014-2015 Strategic Response Plan, around 5.2 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance, and over 2.5 million people are currently displaced.
- In **Syria**, 9.8 million people require food, agriculture and livelihoods-related assistance, according to the Food Security and Livelihoods sector analysis. Of these, around 6.8 million people live in high priority districts and need critical food assistance.
- In **South Sudan**, 2.5 million people are facing *Crisis* (IPC Phase 3) or *Emergency* (IPC Phase 4) levels of food insecurity because conflict has displaced the population, reduced food production and disrupted markets. Phase 4 *Emergency* conditions now prevail in parts of Jonglei and Unity.
- Floods have displaced 230,000 people in **Malawi**, 50,000 in **Mozambique** and 39,000 in **Madagascar**, in locations already vulnerable to food and nutrition security.
- The Ebola epidemic in **Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone** has disrupted markets and trade and led to increasing food insecurity. According to the *Cadre Harmonisé*, as of March, 1.2 million people are in *Crisis* (IPC Phase 3), a figure that is expected to rise to 2.2 million in June.
- Conflict in northern **Nigeria** is leading to massive population displacement, disrupted markets and insecurity in bordering areas of **Cameroon, Chad and Niger**.
- The 'short rains' ('*Deyr*') season of late 2014 has performed poorly across East Africa. North-east **Kenya** and southern **Somalia** have been affected by persistently drier than average conditions. This compounds the effect of significant rainfall deficits during previous seasons, resulting in extended long-term dryness affecting pastoralist resources.
- **South Africa's** first maize production forecast estimates the 2015 harvest to be the worst in 8 years, with a drop of 21 percent relative to the five-year average and 32 percent less than last year's bumper crop.
- Drought in **Central America** has left 2.1 million people food insecure. The affected people will require more food assistance than usual until the next harvest in August.
- Tropical Cyclone Pam made landfall on March 13 near the islands of **Vanuatu** with sustained wind speeds of 270 km/h. Initial estimates of humanitarian impact suggest large devastation, with about 170,000 people, of which 20,000 were identified as poor, being affected.

Fighting Hunger Worldwide

Food insecurity hotspots

MARCH 2015



Regional highlights

EAST AFRICA

- In February 2015, 7.8 million people were in *Crisis* (IPC Phase 3) or *Emergency* (IPC Phase 4), with the largest numbers in **Ethiopia** (2.9 million) **South Sudan** (2.5 million), **Kenya** (1.5 million), **Somalia** (731,000) and **Uganda** (180,000).
- According to the Greater Horn of Africa Climate Outlook Forum, normal to above-normal rains are forecast from March through May in Uganda (except the Karamoja region), parts of western Ethiopia, western Kenya, north-eastern Somalia and most of South Sudan, as well as the north-west cropping areas of **Tanzania**, **Rwanda** and **Burundi**. The food security situation is likely to improve in these areas once harvests start in July/August 2015.
- However, normal to below-normal rains are forecast for the greater part of Kenya, South-Central Somalia and most areas of Ethiopia, **Djibouti** and central Tanzania. This could lead to further deterioration of pasture and water resources, affecting the food and nutrition security situation. The worsening food and nutrition security could be exacerbated by additional factors, including the poor 'short rains' ('Deyr') season of late 2014. North-east, eastern and far southern Kenya and southern Somalia have suffered persistently drier than average conditions since the early stages of the 'Deyr' season.

In focus

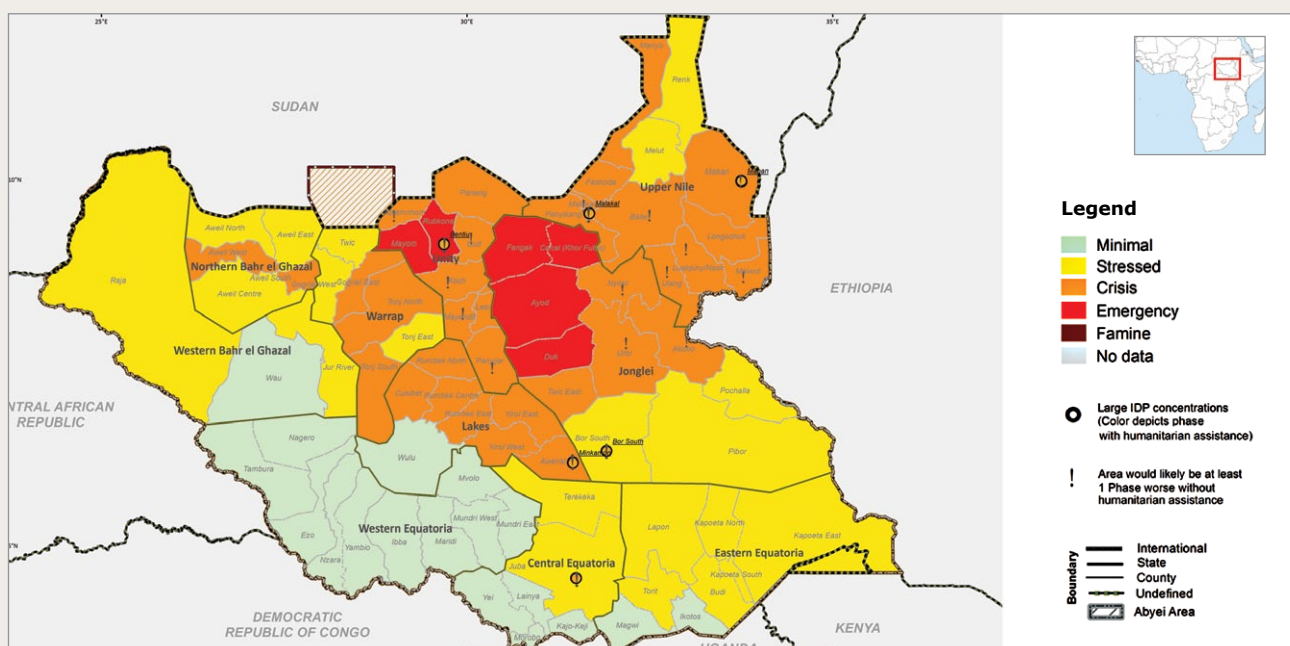
South Sudan Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC)

- According to the most recent IPC update, 2.5 million people faced *Emergency* (IPC Phase 4) and *Crisis* (IPC Phase 3) food insecurity between January and March 2015. The main drivers of food insecurity in the country include conflict-related displacement, disruptions to livestock and crop production, and high staple food prices.
- Conflict has led to the internal displacement of 1.4 million South Sudanese, mostly in the states of Jonglei, Unity and Upper Nile. It has also caused sharp increases in the price of staple foods, and

it has reduced stock levels. Stocks from own production are expected to deplete within the first quarter of 2015 in the worst-affected counties.

- Extremely limited humanitarian access, low household stocks and poorly functioning markets mean that households in Jonglei and Unity are facing *Emergency* food insecurity. Food security in these areas could worsen if humanitarian assistance is not scaled up and if agreements to cease hostilities do not hold.

Updated IPC classification for South Sudan, January-March 2015

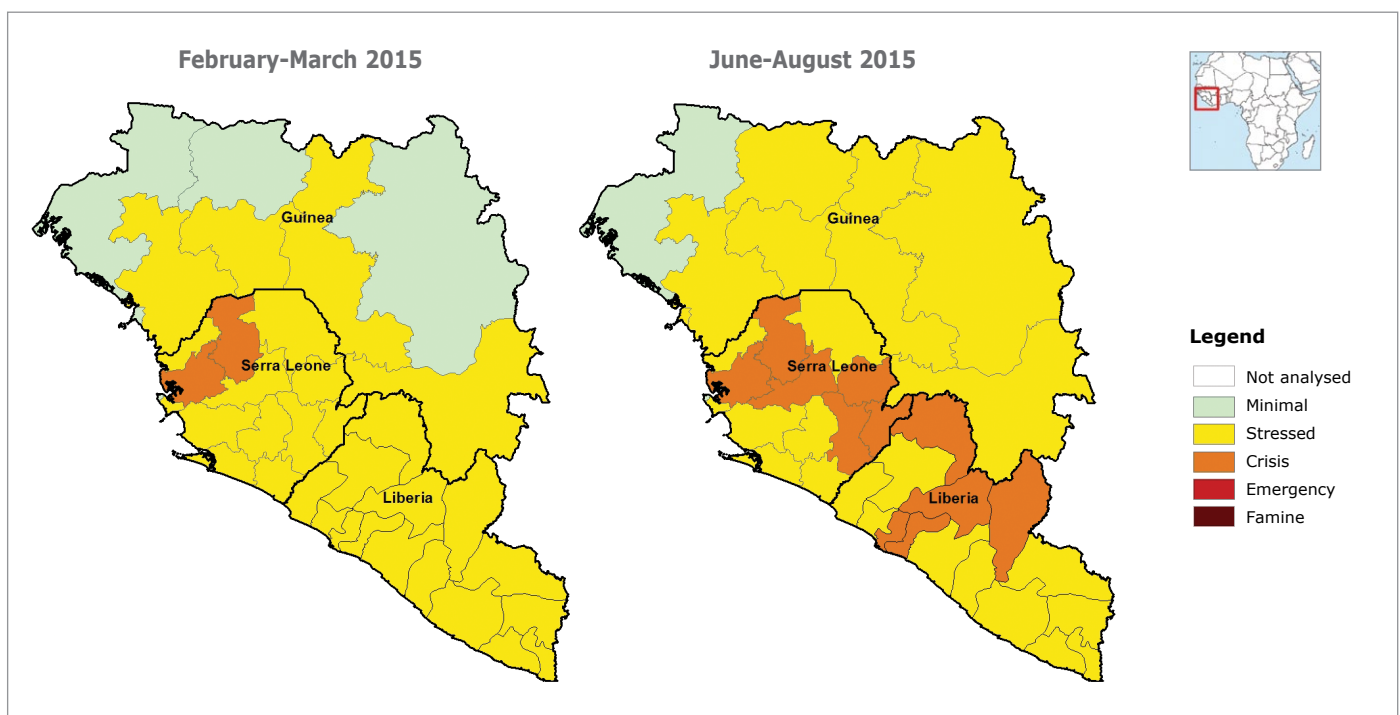


Source: IPC.

WEST AFRICA

- While overall crop prospects are favourable, estimated production in the western **Sahel** (Cape Verde, the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, and Senegal) is 32 percent below the five-year average, according to the CILSS. Grain prices are above average in areas where the crop production was less favourable: northern **Mali**, **Niger**, **Senegal**, **Mauritania** and **Chad**.
- Insecurity in northern **Nigeria** continues to displace the population: over 100,000 refugees have arrived in eastern Niger and 66,000 in **Cameroon's** Far North region, according to UNHCR. Nutrition screenings have revealed GAM rates among newly arrived children of 18 percent, which is above the emergency threshold (15 percent). An estimated 70,000 local people have been displaced in Cameroon's Far North.

Current and projected food insecurity in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone



Source: CILSS.

- According to the February *Cadre Harmonisé*, 1,235,000 people in **Liberia**, **Sierra Leone** and **Guinea** are in a *Crisis* situation now and need immediate assistance.
- WFP data indicates that food insecurity levels are worse in rural areas than in urban areas. In all three countries, the poorest households and households headed by women seem to be most vulnerable to food insecurity.
- In March, markets and trade began to recover with the lifting of quarantines and reopening of the main crossing points between the Ebola-affected countries and neighbouring countries such as Senegal and **Côte d'Ivoire**. Prices of local/imported rice and palm oil remained mostly stable in Liberia and Sierra Leone, although they are still above average because of the appreciation of the US dollar. In February, palm oil prices began to recover in eastern Sierra Leone and Forest Guinea, signalling a recovery in markets and trade. In the rural areas most affected by Ebola, household purchasing power is low; disrupted labour markets are limiting access to food for households who depend on wage labour.
- Household food consumption is expected to deteriorate in the next four to six months because of reduced purchasing power and lower food stocks caused by Ebola. The lean season starts in May/June. According to the *Cadre Harmonisé*, between June and August 2015, an estimated 2,215,000 people will be in *Crisis* in the three countries.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

- Although last year's harvests were generally above normal throughout the region, the current season is

raising concerns because of the concurrence of droughts and floods at critical stages of the growing season.

**In
focus**

Flooding in Madagascar, Malawi and Mozambique

- Floods have displaced 230,000 people in Malawi, 50,000 in Mozambique and 39,000 in Madagascar, all in locations already vulnerable to food and nutrition security. The floods have created food scarcity and led to alarming price hikes in isolated markets of between 30 percent to 130 percent above the five-year average. Price increases are especially pronounced in Madagascar.
- **Madagascar:** The country has had excessive rainfall since January 2015, except for the southern region. The rain has damaged rice fields, including in major rice-producing areas. Food trade to the capital Antananarivo has been disrupted because of poor road conditions in rural areas, sending food prices soaring in the capital. The continuous wet weather has also disrupted the production of wood charcoal, the main cooking fuel for the majority of the population (even in urban areas), leading to a sharp increase in its price.

In the southern region, a shorter cropping season due to recurring droughts is impacting food

security. As of March 16, OCHA is reporting that an estimated 200,000 people in the Great South are in need of immediate food assistance.

- **Malawi:** There was persistent above-average rainfall in January and February, causing serious flooding across the country. UN sources indicate the floods have displaced 230,000 people, damaging roads and bridges. The worst-hit districts were Zomba, Blantyre Rural and Mulanje. Arable land that accounts for 5 percent of the country's annual agriculture output was flooded by late January. Food shortages are persistent and on a large scale.
- **Central Mozambique:** This region has had persistent above-average rainfall since January 2015. UN and government sources indicate that by mid-February, 144,330 people had been affected, most of whom live in the province of Zambézia (119,564 people).

Price trends in Antananarivo, Madagascar

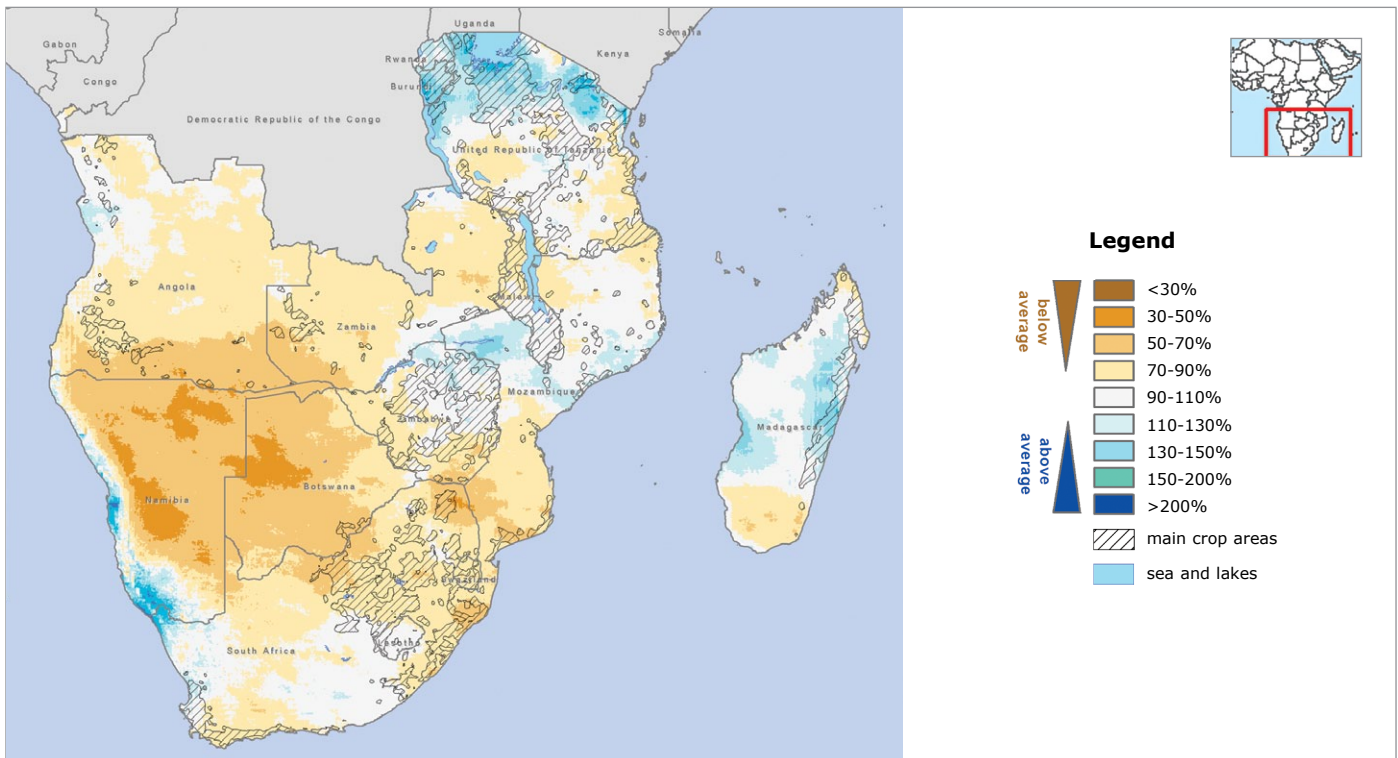
Commodity	% Increase from 20 February to 5 March 2015
Wood Charcoal (bag)	↑ 33%
Bread (loaf)	↑ 33%
Flour (kg)	↑ 40%
Rice (kg)	↑ 8%
Vegetables (kg)	↑ 150%
Potatoes (kg)	↑ 20%

Source: WFP.

- Drier than average conditions have affected parts of eastern **South Africa** and extended into **Botswana**, most of **Namibia** and southern **Angola**. Southern **Mozambique** and southern **Zimbabwe** were also affected. The delayed onset of the season combined with a poor mid-season rainfall pattern at critical stages of maize development, have led to unfavourable expectations for regional maize production.

- South Africa's first maize production forecast estimates the 2015 harvest to be the worst in 8 years, with a drop of 21 percent relative to the five-year average and 32 percent less than last year's bumper crop. Lower South African production could impact maize markets regionally. The countries most exposed to such increases are Lesotho, Botswana, Namibia, Zimbabwe and southern Mozambique.

Southern Africa - Total rainfall (percent of average) by 10 March 2015



Source: WFP VAM, Seasonal Monitor.

ASIA

- In the **Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)**, official Public Distribution System food rations were cut by almost half in August 2014, from 400 to 250 grams per person per day – possibly a reflection of general food scarcity. Such low ration sizes were last seen in 2011. The rations have increased since October, following the main harvest, but the food security situation in the past few months has been worrisome.
- [An FAO report issued in February](#) found that after increasing for three consecutive years, food production in DPRK was stagnant in 2014. The country was affected by low rainfall in the winter, followed by dry spells during the main growing season (April–August), especially in the main growing areas in the south and west – resulting in a 10 percent decrease in the production of paddy rice. While these losses were reportedly offset by a 17 percent increase in the production of maize, the food security prospects for 2015 are concerning.
- FAO has also forecast an average 18 percent drop in 2015 early season crop production of wheat, barley and potatoes compared to last year due to seed, water and fuel scarcity. Although relatively small, the early season harvest plays an important role in national food security as it signals the end of the lean season. In this regard, the forecast suggests that the lean season might be more prolonged and severe this year.
- The food insecurity situation in north-western **Pakistan** remains highly worrying, with over 1.7 million people from the FATA province (Federally Administered Tribal Areas) displaced in the neighboring Khyber Pakhtunwa province. Of these, about 600,000 are recent internally displaced people (IDPs) who fled FATA's North Waziristan agency in June 2014, following the military offensive in the area. In addition, there are a significant number of displaced families in FATA who - while not officially registered as IDPs - were found to be highly food insecure in recent assessments. An IPC analysis conducted in November 2014 found that three of FATA's agencies (Orakzai, North Waziristan and South Waziristan) were classified as being in phase 4 (emergency).
- Cyclone Pam made landfall near the islands of **Vanuatu** on 13 March 2015, with sustained wind speeds of 270 km/h. According to an initial WFP estimate, 170,000 people, of which 20,000 were identified as poor, have been affected. Households along the eastern parts of Shefa province and Tafea were directly in the path of Cyclone Pam. Resilience levels in these areas are lower with many people living in traditional housing and depending on subsistence farming. Most are assumed to have lost their homes and livelihoods. Among the 32,000 people affected in this area, 5,000 were identified as poor.

MIDDLE EAST AND CENTRAL ASIA

- Iraq:** According to the 2014-2015 Strategic Response Plan, 5.2 million people in Iraq need humanitarian assistance. The latest figures from IOM indicate that over, 2.5 million people are displaced. The conflict has made food prices high and volatile in Anbar and Kirkuk, and in parts of Salah Al-Din, according to WFP monitoring. In these areas, the food basket costs 25 to 30 percent more than in the capital Baghdad. Wheat flour prices in Anbar, Kirkuk and Salah Al-Din are more than twice the price in Baghdad, presumably because of reduced distributions of public distribution system (PDS) wheat flour in these areas, and shortages of fresh foods are also reported. The conflict has also hit the unskilled wage labour markets in central governorates, reducing employment opportunities and lowering wage rates, especially in Salah Al-Din. As a result, household purchasing power is lower in areas affected by the conflict. Satellite imagery offers a mixed forecast of crop conditions as the harvest season approaches in April. While vegetation conditions are healthy in the north and south, they are stressed in the conflict-affected governorates of Anbar, Salah Al-Din and Diyala. This suggests that the conflict has had an impact on irrigation, agricultural inputs and fieldwork.
- Syria:** Some 9.8 million people¹ require various levels of food, agriculture and livelihood-related assistance, according to the Food Security and Livelihoods sector analysis. Of these, around 6.8 million people live in high priority districts and need critical food assistance. There has been a big increase

in the use of negative coping strategies in the last year, ranging from the sale of productive assets to the engagement of children in labour, rising rates of early marriage and the involvement of individuals – including children – with armed groups.²

In January, a new decree pushed up the price of bread, diesel and gas. Compared to August 2011, prices have generally increased by 120 percent, while food prices are up by 131 percent. The purchasing power and food security situation of poor households, who mainly depend on local markets, has worsened further. WFP price monitoring data shows substantial price increases for wheat flour and rice since 2011. Between July 2014 and January 2015, the average retail price of bread rose by 55 percent.

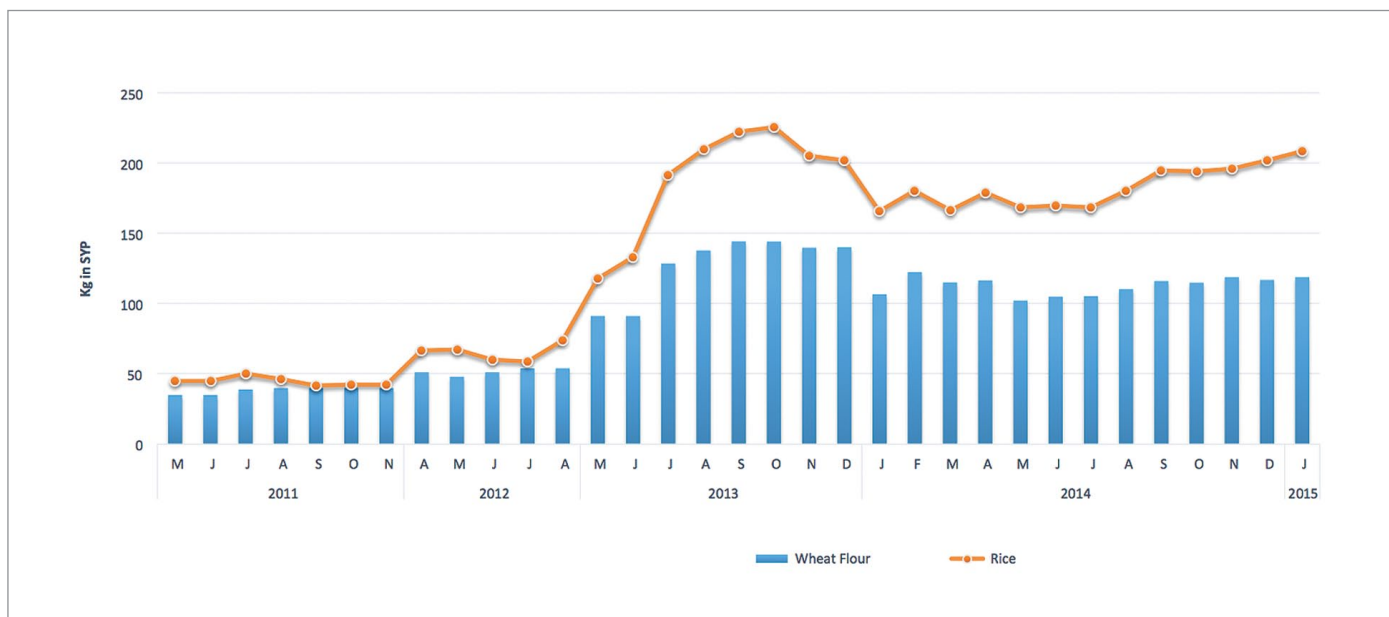
Winter storm 'Huda' brought snow, heavy rainfall and strong winds to Syria and neighbouring countries in January 2015. Poor Syrian households have been severely affected by the storm, especially IDPs living in camps and informal settlements. The storm also damaged the agricultural sector.

- Palestine:** Food security has been deteriorating because of displacement, livelihood disruption and increasing unemployment. From December 2014 to February 2015, Palestinian Authority employees only received 60 percent of their salaries because of budgetary restrictions. Reconstruction since the August 2014 conflict has been slow, and the electricity and fuel crisis is constraining the economy.

1. Food Security and Livelihoods Sector, Whole of Syria, Food Security Prioritization Matrix (2014).

2. Save the Children, January 2015. *Understanding livelihoods in Northern Syria: how people are coping with repeated shocks, constant change and an uncertain future.*

Retail Prices of Wheat Flour and Rice in Syria

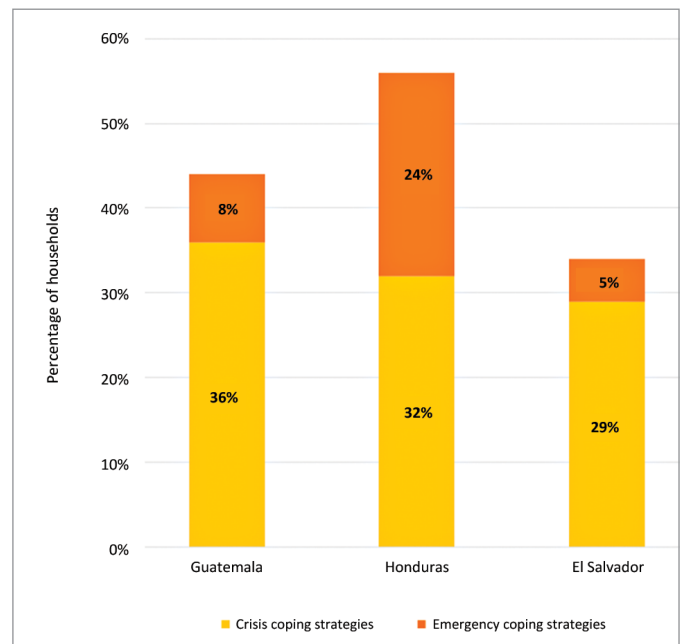


Source: WFP.

LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN

- The long dry spell during the first cropping season of 2014 (*primera*) has affected the food security situation of the most vulnerable households in parts of **El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras** and **Nicaragua**. WFP, government, UN agencies and NGOs jointly conducted food security assessments in September 2014. They found that 2.1 million people are moderately or severely food insecure, including 25 percent of households in Guatemala (874,000 people), 36 percent of households in Honduras (682,000 people), and 13 percent of households in El Salvador (85,000 people) and Nicaragua (460,000 people, based on an initial estimate).
- In drought-affected areas, the vast majority depend on basic grain production or agricultural daily labour for income. A significant number of participants reported that their most important income source was affected by the drought. High levels of crisis and emergency level livelihood coping strategies were found in all three countries, as shown in the graph on the right.
- Crisis strategies included consuming seed reserves and reducing expenditure on health, education and agricultural inputs. Emergency strategies consisted of begging, selling breeding livestock and selling land. Migration was also an issue.
- Of particular concern was the percentage of households with low or medium levels of dietary diversity, a situation affecting 84 percent of households in Honduras, 77 percent in Guatemala and 41 percent in El Salvador. Across all three countries there was very low consumption of iron-rich foods, even in households with good food consumption. Households with poor consumption also showed a deficit in protein and foods rich in vitamin A.
- Although the *postrera* seasonal rains and cropping season was generally normal, the relative importance of the secondary harvest coupled with the livelihood

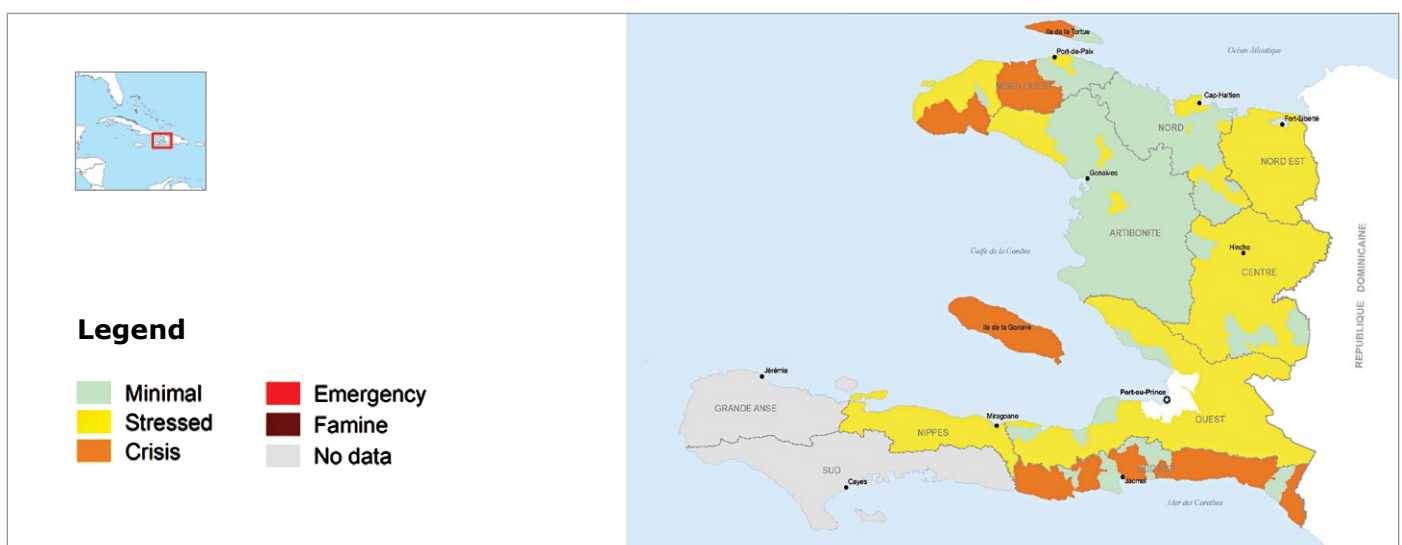
Use of crisis and emergency livelihood coping strategies in drought-affected countries



impacts of the first harvest losses mean there will be a continued need for humanitarian and livelihood assistance until the next *primera* harvest in August 2015.

- In **Haiti**, a persistent lack of rain in marginal agricultural areas has led to a mediocre 2014/2015 spring crop, which is 40 percent below 2013/2014. According to the December IPC, food insecurity is forecast to increase during the March–June lean season, with *Crisis* (IPC3) levels of food insecurity predicted in areas of the South East, Gonave Island and in the North West.

IPC food security classification for Haiti, March-June 2015



Source: IPC.



Methodology

IPC standardized protocols respond to the need for a common approach for classifying various food insecurity situations, within and among countries, and across time.

Acute food insecurity is classified according to 5 phases:

- Phase 1:** None/Minimal
- Phase 2:** Stressed
- Phase 3:** Crisis
- Phase 4:** Emergency
- Phase 5:** Humanitarian Catastrophe/Famine

For more information on IPC please visit www.ipcinfo.org

Acronyms

CILSS	Comité permanent Inter-Etats de Lutte contre la Sécheresse dans le Sahel	GAM	Global Acute Malnutrition
CFSAM	Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission	IDP	internally displaced person
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea	IOM	International Organization for Migration
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
FSNWG	Food Security and Nutrition Working Group	UNCHR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
FEWS NET	Famine Early Warning Systems Network	VAM	Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping
		WFP	World Food Programme

Information sources

CILSS	www.cilss.bf	OCHA	www.unocha.org
FAO	www.fao.org	UNHCR	www.unhcr.org
FEWS NET	www.fews.net	UNICEF	www.unicef.org
FSNAU	www.fsnau.org	UNRWA	www.unrwa.org
FSNWG	www.disasterriskreduction.net/fsnwg	WFP	www.wfp.org/food-security
IOM	www.iom.int		http://foodprices.vam.wfp.org/ALPS-at-a-glance.aspx
IPC	www.ipcinfo.org		

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