FAMINE EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS NETWORK

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Food Security Outlook

June 2022 to January 2023

Worsening security situation disrupting harvests in eastern parts

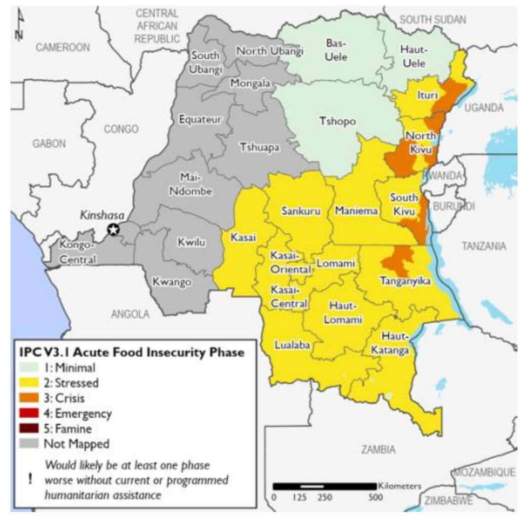
KEY MESSAGES

- Season B harvests are starting in eastern parts of the country amid renewed hostilities, particularly on the volcanic agricultural land in Rutshuru, which may mean a smaller harvest than in the previous growing season. Climate disruption was reflected in delayed rains on the Ruzizi plain, the breadbasket of the central eastern area, which damaged crops in the first two months of the growing cycle.

- The resurgence of the earlier March 23 (M23) rebellion has soured already tense relations between the countries in the Grands Lacs region. Fighting between this armed group and loyalist forces has already caused the displacement of around 100,000 people, according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). This could lead to widespread clashes in border areas between the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Rwanda, exacerbating the already precarious humanitarian situation in the region.

- In the provinces of Ituri and Nord-Kivu, which are plagued by conflict and still experiencing significant population movements, the population is facing increasing consumption deficits and the area remains in Crisis (IPC Phase 3). The stable area in the central north remains in Minimal (IPC Phase 1), with Stressed (IPC Phase 2) areas in the central east, where households will experience minimally adequate food consumption.

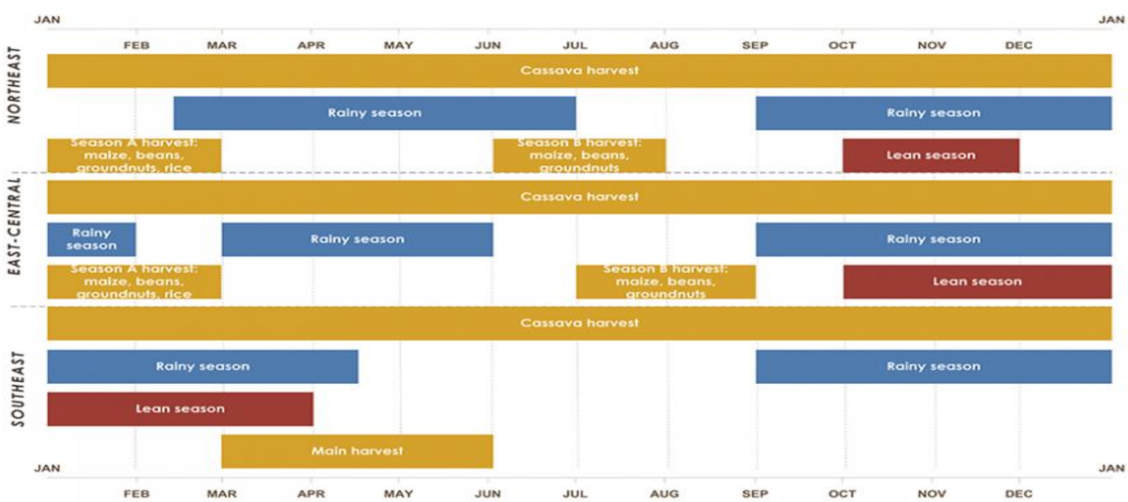
Current food security outcomes, June 2022



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.

SEASONAL CALENDAR FOR A TYPICAL YEAR



Source: *FEWS NET*

FEWS NET DRC
drc@fews.net
www.fews.net/drc

FEWS NET is a USAID-funded activity. The content of this report does not necessarily reflect the view of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

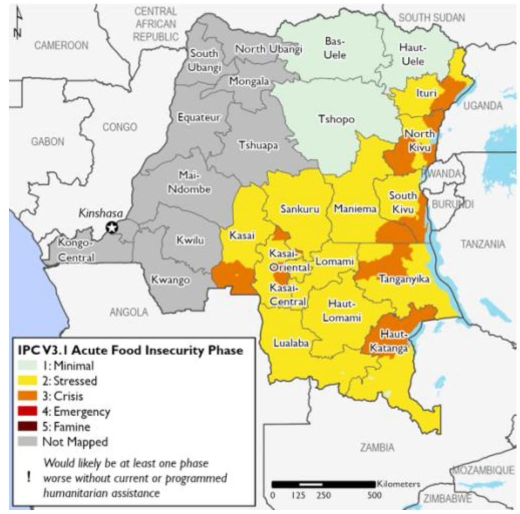
USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

NATIONAL OVERVIEW

Current Situation

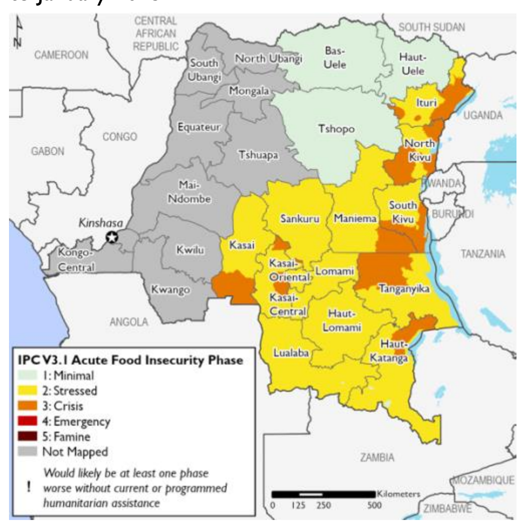
Security situation and population movements: Populations in conflict zones are experiencing increasing impact from multiple forms of violence, which is leading to widespread forced displacement, particularly in the east of the country. In April 2022, the East African Community launched an initiative calling on these armed groups to surrender. The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) reports a decrease in hostilities compared to January 2022. However, on the ground, there continue to be both clashes between armed groups and intercommunity conflict. This is despite an extension to the state of siege in the provinces of Nord-Kivu and Ituri, and a pooling of operations between the Ugandan army (Uganda People's Defence Force, UPDF) and the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC). According to OCHA alerts, from January to April 2022, 750,129 people were newly displaced in the DRC. The DRC currently has nearly 5.6 million internally displaced persons in 13 provinces, 85 percent of whom are in Nord-Kivu, Sud-Kivu, or Ituri (Figure 1).

Projected food security outcomes, June to September 2022



Source: *FEWS NET*

Projected food security outcomes, October 2022 to January 2023



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.

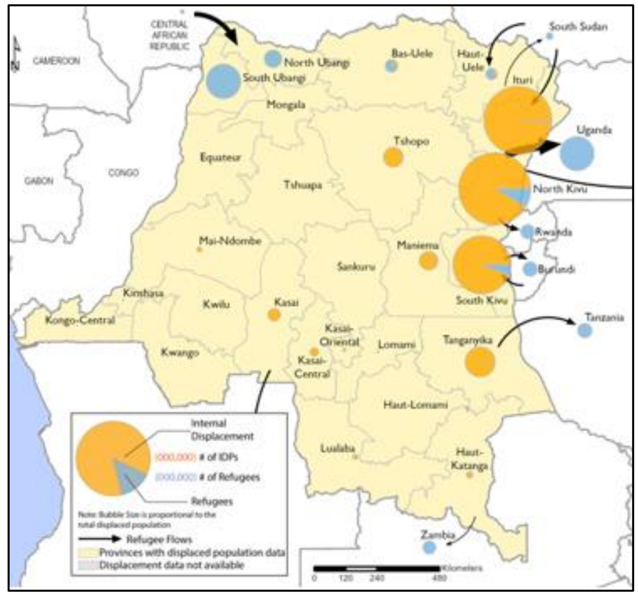
Progress of the growing season: Growing season B, which runs from mid-March to June, got off to a good start in the northeastern and central eastern parts of the country, and there are indications that the growing cycle will be mostly normal. However, in the northeastern, southeastern, and central eastern parts of the country, there were sudden population movements during the growing season. Combined with poor rainfall distribution during season B, particularly on the Ruzizi plain, this resulted in low production at the end of the season. Cumulative rainfall for the 2021/22 season was significantly below average in central eastern DRC. The subsequent harvests are expected to be below average, and likely to generate only low levels of local supply.

Markets and trade flows: According to FEWS NET market analysis, there are atypical cyclical fluctuations in the prices of the main imported products – in particular rice and refined vegetable oil – due to slowdowns in supplies and speculative supplies, likely linked to the crisis in Ukraine. There is also a slowdown in supplies from neighboring countries such as Rwanda, Uganda, and Tanzania due to the uncertainty caused by the current global crisis. Fuel prices have also increased due to limited imports in recent months. Since April, fuel prices in the DRC have risen by between 10 and 30 percent, depending on the market. This has had an impact on the prices of goods and services, and therefore on poor households' access to foods that form an important part of their food basket. Despite a relative fall in the prices of local products following the season B harvests, the higher cost of transport due to rising global prices for petroleum products is keeping prices above average.

Agricultural and non-agricultural labor: Labor is still available in agricultural areas, mostly provided by poor households who have not had access to their land due to repeated displacement during the conflicts. These are poor households who work for middle-income and wealthy households. In terms of mining labor, the mines are increasingly controlled by the militia, who commit atrocities against miners, as observed in the Djugu territory in Ituri. It is difficult to ascertain the availability of labor given this instability and insecurity. Most mining operators have suspended their activities due to the atrocities by armed groups.

Overall economic conditions: According to the Ministry of Finance, the DRC's economy is currently performing well. This is a result of the surge in international prices for raw materials. However, since March 2022, fuel prices have been adjusted following the ongoing exogenous shocks due to the increase in international fuel prices, which has led to a rise in transport costs. Meanwhile, the national currency has undergone monthly depreciation, standing at 1.033 percent at the end of April 2022. This instability in local currency is also contributing to price instability, not only for imported products but also for locally produced commodities.

Figure 1. Map of population movements



Source: *UNOCHA/UNHCR/FEWS NET*

The overall trend for the DRC's main mining exports is slightly down. On May 3, 2022, the price of a ton of zinc was down by 3 percent. In addition, according to the World Bank, the rise in energy prices over the past two years has been the highest since the 1973 oil crisis.

Humanitarian assistance: During this period, the various interventions have reached 1.8 million out of the target of 8.8 million in the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), giving an achievement rate of approximately 20 percent. Most food security interventions are concentrated in the eastern part (Nord-Kivu, Ituri, Tanganyika, Sud-Kivu, and Maniema), with some also in northwestern and central areas (Nord-Ubangi, Kasaï, Kasaï Oriental, and Kasaï Central).

Current food security outcomes

This June, which sees the start of season B harvests in the northeast, central east, and southeast, current agricultural production will improve food availability in the region and thus reduce the consumption deficit observed there. However, in the northeast, where there are significant population movements, some will experience low production and others will not be taking part in the growing season. As a result, the northeast will not be able to cover its consumption deficit through the harvests from this growing season alone and will remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3). In contrast, households in the provinces of Maniema and Tanganyika, most of which are in a post-conflict situation and have been able to take part in the season's agricultural activities, are Stressed (IPC Phase 2) as they are able to meet their minimum requirements for food consumption. Finally, the stable areas in the north — which have had a typical growing season and are having near-normal harvests, boosting access to sources of income and food — are not experiencing a food consumption deficit and are in Minimal (IPC Phase 1).

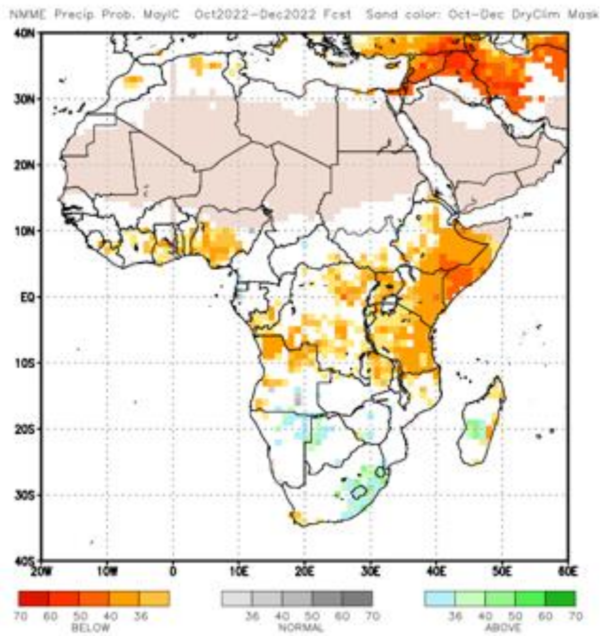
Trends in global acute malnutrition trends and epidemics: Recent reports from the Nutritional Surveillance, Food Security and Early Warning System (SNSAP in French) have issued alerts for several health districts in the DRC. The latest Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions (SMART) surveys conducted in some areas have found high rates of severe acute malnutrition, sometimes above critical thresholds. According to the Nutrition Cluster, approximately 2.2 million people are experiencing acute malnutrition in the DRC. The east of the country is particularly affected by population movements, which are a contributory factor for malnutrition.

Meanwhile, the western part is particularly affected by chronic conditions. In addition, measles outbreaks have been reported in several provinces, including Sankuru, Tanganyika, and Sud-Ubangi.

Assumptions

The most likely scenario for June 2022 to January 2023 is based on the following assumptions at the national level.

Figure 2. Percentage of average seasonal rainfall (North American Multi-Model Ensemble – NMME), October to December 2022



Source: *United States Geological Survey (USGS)/FEWS NET*

- **Conflict and population movements:**
  - *Ituri/Nord-Kivu:* Conflict could worsen in these two provinces, and participation in income-generating activities could be disrupted.
  - *Sud-Kivu:* In the coming months, attacks by rebel groups are likely to increase as they seek to recapture lost ground.
  - *Tanganyika:* Despite the lull observed in the area, the current intercommunity conflicts are likely to continue sporadically, although with far fewer conflict incidents than reported in the high-intensity conflict areas of Nord-Kivu and Sud-Kivu.

- **Agroclimatic conditions:** Based on NMME and World Meteorological Organization (WMO) forecasts, there is a high likelihood of average rainfall over much of southern Africa, including the DRC, from October 2022 to January 2023. This is likely to result in a normal start to season A (Figure 2). There may be above-average rainfall in January 2023 due to the expected La Niña conditions. Average temperatures are likely throughout the southern region. In bimodal areas in the northeast and central eastern regions, the growing cycle is expected to begin on time.

- **Agricultural production (season B) and food availability:** Harvests for growing season B, as in previous seasons, are expected to be below average throughout the eastern area, due to incessant population movements that have resulted in low household participation in farming activities, particularly in areas with active conflicts. There will be low availability of local food in the face of rising demand.

- **Economic conditions:** Energy prices are likely to rise by more than 50 percent in 2022. Prices of agricultural products and metals are expected to rise by almost 20 percent in 2022 and then fall in the coming years. Given the monthly depreciation, the instability of the local currency could lead to price volatility, not only for imported goods but also for locally produced commodities, during the scenario period.

- **Markets and household stocks:** With below-average harvests expected for season B, there is expected to be low availability of local produce but steady demand. Household stocks from season B will not be sufficient to cover needs until August. Following this will be the lean season, during which households will be mostly dependent on market purchases until the next harvest in mid-December 2022, while experiencing declining purchasing power. Markets will operate as normal, except in conflict areas, where the security situation is disrupting market supplies and functioning.

- **Food prices:** Prices will rise for basic foods. In the coming months and linked to the crisis in Ukraine, the price of rice is expected to rise due to higher consumption, increased trade, and depletion of stocks. Maize prices are expected to rise due to high demand for it for food, seed, and industrial use, and due to reduced stocks. Wheat prices are expected to rise and remain above 2021 levels because global exports are expected to be lower.

- **Fertilizer situation in connection with the crisis in Ukraine:** The DRC imports about 65 million tons of fertilizer annually, a large proportion of which comes from Russia. The economic restrictions imposed on Russia will inevitably reduce supplies from this source, while there will be steady local demand, mainly for nitrogen fertilizers. Fertilizer prices may therefore increase, limiting farming households' access to them.

- **Non-agricultural labor (mining):** With the fall in global prices for raw materials, particularly copper and cobalt, there may be a reduction in income for non-agricultural labor in mining areas, mainly in the southeast of the country (Lualaba and Haut-Katanga provinces). In addition, in the eastern part of the country, there may be a significant reduction in non-agricultural labor due to the activities of armed groups and their occupation of mines.

- **Humanitarian access:** Given that the HRP was only able to reach 20 percent of the target population due to low funding in 2022, and given the increase in needs due to new crises in Rutshuru, coverage of food assistance will remain low.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

From June to September 2022, northeastern and central eastern areas will experience first a two-month post-harvest period (June and July), then the start of the lean season, which will begin early in August due to the poor harvests for the previous season. The June harvests will allow households to improve their food consumption for as long as their food stocks last. These households, who will have improved their income by selling harvest produce, will then be dependent on their own production. Starting in August, with the lean season expected to be earlier and longer than for season B, and with reserves almost completely depleted, most households will be dependent on the market for their supplies. In conflict-affected areas, the worsening security situation could result in additional households abandoning their livelihoods, and thus food consumption deficits gradually increasing over subsequent growing seasons. Eastern areas experiencing the impacts of the protracted crisis will remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3), in particular Ituri (Irumu and Djugu), Sud-Kivu (Uvira and Fizi), and Nord-Kivu (Beni, Rutshuru, and Masisi). There are attempts to improve stability in the provinces of Lomami, Sankuru, Kasaï Oriental, Kasaï, parts of Maniema, and the former Katanga. Here, households have better access to food and income as they have been able to conduct full growing seasons, and they will be Stressed (IPC Phase 2). The provinces of Haut-Uélé, Bas-Uélé and Tshopo, which have not experienced significant shocks and do not have a food consumption deficit, will remain in Minimal (IPC Phase 1).

From October 2022 to January 2023, which corresponds to the peak of the lean season in eastern DRC, households throughout the area will be in an increasingly difficult situation, with limited access to food due to depletion of stocks. The green harvests in December are expected to provide relief to populations who have begun to develop often damaging and irreversible coping strategies, and to improve household food consumption throughout the east. Much of northern and central DRC, including Bas-Uélé, Haut-Uélé, Tshopo, Sankuru, and Lualaba, which is considered a stable area with sufficient stocks to cover the lean season, is expected to be in Minimal (IPC Phase 1). Meanwhile, central southern and southeastern DRC, in particular Maniema, Sud-Kivu, and the former Katanga, are expected to become Stressed (IPC Phase 2).

Trends in malnutrition: According to figures from the latest nutritional surveys conducted in the DRC, the prevalence of severe acute malnutrition is above the critical (>5 percent) and even emergency (>10 percent) thresholds in some provinces of Kasaï, and in Haut-Lomami, Ituri, and Nord-Ubangi. The additional population movements expected over the coming period will further weaken the livelihoods of the most vulnerable and lead to increasingly worrying food deficits, especially in areas of military operation.

Events that Might Change the Outlook

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

Area	Event	Impact on food security outcomes
National	End of the Russia-Ukraine conflict	The supply of imported products could return to normal frequency with a positive impact on availability, which would ultimately drive down the prices of imports.
	End of COVID-19 restrictions	The opening of borders would encourage trade flows, and poor households in border areas who rely on informal small-scale trade would be able to rebuild their income and improve their access to food.
	Stable agroclimatic conditions with average rainfall in all areas	This would favor normal agricultural production and thus reduce the food consumption deficits observed in many areas of the country that are in Crisis (IPC Phase 3).
	Further increase in the price of basic cereals and fuel in international markets	There are fears of a steep rise in cereal and fuel prices as a result of the Russia-Ukraine crisis. This may lead to an increase in the prices of major foods, and a reduction in access to imported food for poor households.
	Climate disruption in the area	Excessive and/or insufficient rainfall could impact the next growing cycle and exacerbate flood damage.
Ituri, Nord-Kivu, Sud-Kivu, Tanganyika, Maniema	Surrender of armed groups and less-intense armed conflict	Under the Nairobi Process, the East African Community called on most of the armed groups to attend negotiations. Surrender of these armed groups would reduce population movements and increase participation in agricultural activities. At the end of the season, this would improve access to food and income sources for poor households.
Nord-Kivu and Ituri	Surrender of foreign armed groups and return to their own countries	The East African Community is preparing to launch an offensive against foreign armed groups in the DRC. This process may encourage foreign armed groups to surrender, thereby reducing the level of violence and favoring the return of displaced populations.

AREAS OF CONCERN

Djugu territory: Northeast Highlands Agriculture (CD14)

Current Situation

Security situation and population movements: Rebel attacks have continued throughout Ituri province, despite the declared state of siege having been extended. Militia from the Cooperative for the Development of Congo (CODECO) have stepped up violence toward the population in Ituri and the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF). The ADF have shown increasing capacity to attack in this province, especially in the territories of Irumu and Mambasa.

Figure 3. Reference map of Djugu territory

Source: *FEWS NET*

In the territory of Djugu, the security situation is very worrying. Since the beginning of 2022, there have been numerous atrocities and attacks against the civilian population, including at sites for internally displaced persons. The various alerts on population movements received by OCHA since the beginning of 2022 indicate that more than 134,272 people have been displaced and 61,975 people have returned. The health districts most affected by these population movements are Mangala, Nizi, Bambou, Mungwalu, Linga, Jiba, Drodro, and Fataki. According to data from the agricultural inspectorate, over the past three years the number of farming households has decreased by 27 percent.

Agricultural conditions and seasonal progress: According to the provincial agricultural inspectorate, 60 to 70 percent of growing season A (September 2021 to January 2022) was lost, with only 30 to 40 percent of the population able to take part in the season, compared to 80 percent in a typical year. The area sown per household has also reduced by half, currently standing at around 0.25 ha. This is because most farming households were displaced and did not have access to their fields as a result of the heightened conflict in the first three months of 2022. Only farmers in the northern part of the territory (Linga, Rethy, and Lita health districts), which is experiencing a relative lull, took part in agricultural activities last season. However, the fields in the conflict zone in the northeast of the territory are being harvested either by militia or by regular army soldiers who are not receiving their survival rations. Climate disruption has been observed during this season B, in the form of delayed rains at the start of the season and abundant rains during the flowering period, which has had serious impacts on agricultural production during the season. Households that took part in the growing season are waiting for the harvests to start in June 2022.

Mining activities: Militia control many of the mines and current atrocities are concentrated around these areas, where miners are regularly killed. In May, dozens of miners were massacred in the mining areas of Djugu. Most mining operators have completely shut down their activities as a result of the atrocities committed by armed groups. The mining company Kilo-Moto, which has been insolvent for several years, no longer guarantees work for local people. It now only collects operating taxes on areas where artisanal mining is taking place, and harnesses hydroelectric energy to serve the populations of the town of Bunia and its surroundings.

Livestock: The Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA) conducted by WFP in August 2021 showed that in the territory of Djugu, only 12 percent of households currently own livestock – mainly poultry (45.5 percent) and goats (25.5 percent) – compared to about 60 percent of households usually owning livestock. Current developments in the conflict have resulted in many livestock being looted, and most large-scale livestock farmers have migrated to Aru and the neighboring province of Haut-Uélé.

The provincial livestock inspectorate estimates that more than 80 percent of goats have been destroyed, and there has been systematic looting of poultry farms. Only pigs remain in the territory, because for religious reasons the militia do not approach pigs. However, the territory has been affected by swine fever for almost five years. The provincial livestock inspectorate estimates that around 12 percent of livestock have been lost to animal diseases in the past two years, not counting those lost due to armed conflict.

Trends in fishing activities on Lake Albert: The entire eastern part of Djugu borders an area along the coast of Lake Albert, where armed groups tend to practice illegal fishing. At the same time, the Ugandan navy repeatedly hunts down and arrests Congolese fishermen on the lake for not respecting the maritime border. In response, the provincial authorities of Ituri have set up a body to monitor the lake, but this body is barely functional. According to statistics from the provincial fisheries inspectorate, despite the security situation there has been a 57 percent resurgence in fishing activity since 2010. This has resulted in a shortage of fish products in local markets.

Markets and trade flows: Market functioning has been completely disrupted because people can no longer move more than 2 km from their respective villages due to the security situation and violence by armed groups. Out of a dozen markets in the territory, only the one in the town of Iga-Barrière is still functioning normally. Supply routes are also unsafe because of the militia. The territory of Djugu has significant economic trade with Uganda, via Lake Edward and the territory of Mahagi. Border crossing requirements demand negative COVID-19 test results, which are expensive for the average household. These measures have negatively affected the incomes of these households, and those who were engaged in informal trade with Uganda via Lake Edward have directly lost their livelihoods. It is therefore becoming increasingly difficult for these poor households to access food, given their low incomes in a context of rising prices for key food products and fuel.

Humanitarian assistance: According to statistics from the Food Security Cluster, 108,740 people have received food assistance since the beginning of 2022. This represents less than a quarter (23 percent) of those targeted, and 5.7 percent of the population of the territory.

Food consumption: The EFSA conducted by WFP in August 2021 estimated that 91 percent of households had poor or borderline food consumption scores, while 62.1 percent of households were experiencing severe hunger and only 47 percent of households had good dietary diversity. As production is below average this growing season, there is low local availability of food. Poor performance in recent growing seasons, as well as conflict and population displacement, have exacerbated the already worrying situation for food consumption. Households have had to make increasingly detrimental changes to their food sources over the years, and have limited access to food.

Assumptions

In addition to the assumptions at the national level, the most likely scenario from June 2022 to January 2023 in Djugu territory is based on the following assumptions.

- **Agricultural production:** Given the active presence of armed groups who are committing violence toward the civilian population, harvests for this season B will be below average. Population movements may result in low participation by farming households in the 2023 season A, and significantly lower agricultural production in this area, which once provided a surplus of major food crops and was the main breadbasket of Ituri province. Households' limited access to fields and mines due to violence by armed groups may result in reduced household income.

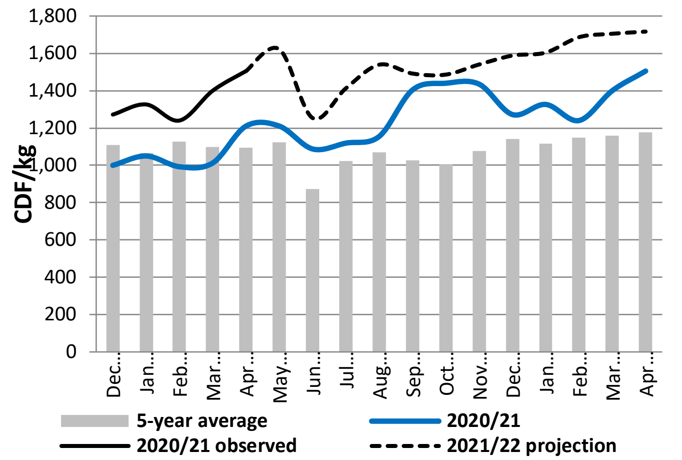
- **Agricultural and non-agricultural labor:** With the large number of displaced persons scattered throughout urban and rural areas, particularly Bunia, temporary work in the fields could be one of the main sources of income. There will thus be a guaranteed supply of agricultural labor for wealthy households, who may reduce daily rates due to increased supply. Displaced persons will be able to find other opportunities in transport, construction, and domestic work to meet their immediate needs in urban and rural areas.

- **Small-scale cross-border trade:** The activities of armed groups are reportedly continuing to impede the movement of people and goods on the roads and on the lake. This may continue to negatively impact the livelihoods of poor households who rely on informal trade.

- **Markets and projected prices:** Ambushes by armed militia on the Bunia–Mahagi–Uganda and Bunia–Aru roads in this pre-harvest period have created insecurity and significantly reduced traffic on these main supply routes from neighboring Uganda to Bunia. These activities by armed groups would explain the distortion of market prices. The price of maize flour is likely to fall during the harvest months and to rise from November onward. There are reported to be similar incidents on the road linking the provinces of Ituri and Nord-Kivu. The price of maize flour will remain higher than in the same period in 2021, and above the five-year average (Figure 4).

- **Humanitarian assistance:** Humanitarian assistance will continue in the territory, but at a low level as most humanitarian plans are not fully covered.

Figure 4. Projected price of maize flour in Bunia



Source: *FEWS NET*

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

From June to September 2022, household food consumption may improve with the small harvests from growing season B. However, as households will only have very low stocks, the new access to food will only last for a limited period. Given that many displaced households have not been able to cultivate their fields, and food aid is not sufficient, this area will remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) during this period.

From September 2022 to January 2023, food consumption may deteriorate as the agricultural lean season sets in. With the worsening security situation in the area, displaced households will not have access to their livelihoods and will be dependent on food assistance, which unfortunately will not be able to cover all their needs. Most households will remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3). However, in health districts that are experiencing large population movements (in particular Mangala, Drodro, Damas, Mungwalu, Fataki, Bambo, Lita, and Nizi), a minority of households who have lost all their productive assets and have not been able to engage in agriculture at all will be in Emergency (IPC Phase 4).

Nutrition: The latest National Nutrition Program (PRONANUT) survey in the health districts of Mangala and Drodro in August 2021 showed prevalence of acute malnutrition above the emergency threshold. Increased violence by armed militia, which is preventing access to food sources and reducing food availability in this area, may have additional repercussions on the nutritional status of already fragile populations.

Events that Might Change the Outlook

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

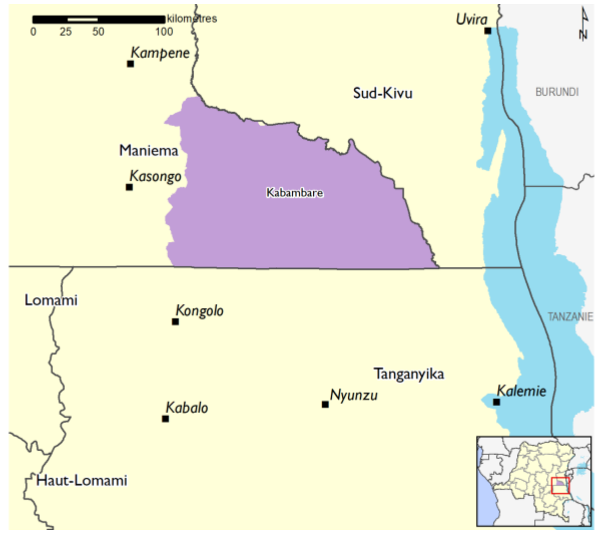
Area	Event	Impact on food security outcomes
Djugu	Significant reduction in the intensity of conflicts in the area	Some factions of the armed group CODECO are in discussions with the government about surrendering. Surrender of this armed group would allow the return of displaced populations and a significant resumption of agricultural activities, resulting in increased production and more income for households.
	Improvements to agricultural access roads during the next growing season	This would have a positive impact on transport costs and would thus promote trade between areas.
	Climate disruption in the area	Excessive and/or insufficient rainfall could impact the next growing cycle and exacerbate flood damage.

Kabambare territory: Maniema Savannah Agriculture (CD06)

Current Situation

Security situation and population movements: Conflicts in this territory are due to lack of compliance with the agreements between the mining company Banro Corporation and the local population about mining operations at the Namoya mine. In addition, there is intercommunity conflict between the Twa and the Bantu peoples, which began in Tanganyika and has spread to Maniema. After Banro Corporation ceased operations and left, there was an uneasy lull in the area, followed by a resumption of clashes between different armed groups. The Mai Mai Malaika are very active in the area, in particular raping women while they are working in the fields. Low coverage by the security forces is among the factors favoring criminal activities by armed groups in this landlocked region. They are accused of numerous human rights abuses, including bodily harm and arbitrary arrests for ransom. Twa fighters have been known to commit robberies in Babuyu sector, in Kabambare health district, particularly of people using national road 5 (RN5).

Figure 5. Map of Kabambare territory



Source: *FEWS NET*

A report on a multisectoral rapid assessment conducted by the NGO ACTED in Kabambare territory in November 2021 identified 40 percent of households surveyed as displaced, following interviews with local leaders and managers of health facilities, and after a door-to-door census of households in the various target villages that had hosted displaced persons. These numbers have continued to rise with the resumption of clashes in the area. No displaced households have returned to their areas of origin, due to ongoing fighting between armed groups and the FARDC.

Agricultural conditions and seasonal progress: Kabambare territory, which is located in the central eastern area, is at the beginning of season B harvests. The main crops are cassava, maize, rice, and groundnut, which are grown in the southern part of the territory. Oil palm is also grown as a cash crop. Given the severely damaged road infrastructure, which is preventing produce from being transported to consumption centers, households have turned to subsistence farming, just for their own consumption. As a result of the conflicts in the area, which are limiting households' access to fields, production has been 10 to 30 percent below average over recent seasons. Nearly 70 percent of agricultural activities are still carried out by women, while young and old people focus on mining activities.

Households in the territory are having difficulty in accessing quality seeds and pesticides for agricultural activities due to the area's inaccessibility. Plants are under pressure from African cassava mosaic virus (ACMV) and caterpillar attacks on maize. The territory of Kabambare has huge potential for agriculture, due to the opportunities presented by its plains and soil quality. Unfortunately, this potential is not sufficiently harnessed.

According to the latest WFP assessment (EFSA 2021), the main crops grown by households in Kabambare territory are rice (63.6 percent of households), cassava, groundnut, sweet potato, plantain, and market garden crops.

Mining activities: There is a decline in mining activities. The main minerals extracted are gold, coltan, and cassiterite. At present, Mai Mai Malaika groups control many of the mines and current atrocities are concentrated around these areas, where miners are regularly killed. Banro Corporation previously held a monopoly on mining in the territory, but it has just ceased to operate due to a misunderstanding with the local population. Many of the company's workers came from neighboring provinces. Meanwhile local people were poorly represented (10 percent) in the company's operations, and were no longer able to conduct artisanal mining in the company's concession due to conflicts in the area. Artisanal mining is practiced in Babuyu sector in the north of the territory.

Despite the general decline in mining activities, young people – who make up a large part of the active population in the area – have abandoned agricultural activities in favor of artisanal mining activities. This is contributing to a lack of agricultural labor supply and to the decline in agricultural production in this territory. Mining labor is considered more lucrative, being remunerated by sharing daily earnings among the group of workers after the product is sold to buyers onsite, while payment for agricultural labor is capped at 3,000 CDF per day.

Livestock: Information gathered from the provincial authorities for agriculture and livestock indicates a decline in livestock farming in Kabambare territory, due to the security situation and lack of control of animal diseases. Following a conflict between nomadic livestock farmers and local landowners whose crops were ravaged by grazing cattle, the livestock farmers were forced to move to Kasongo territory.

Artisanal fishing: The territory of Kabambare is located in the Congo River watershed. Fishing is practiced on the Lukuga River and other small rivers such as Lulindi, Lwama, and Kilunguti. There are more fish in the Lwama River than in the others. Artisanal methods are used for fishing. There are reported problems, such as encroachment on riverbeds by artisanal mining operations using dredges that disrupt fishing. Although there is huge potential for fish farming, which forms part of income-generating activities, Kabambare does not generate much revenue due to poor fish conservation – disease is rarely diagnosed and sometimes remains untreated, preventing production from reaching the major consumption centers. The sector is poorly organized and those who engage in fishing use it only for subsistence.

Markets and trade flows: In Kabambare territory, there are large consumption centers but only two markets, Salamabila and Wamaza. Production has been suffering since armed groups arrived in the area. Market prices for basic necessities have increased. The territory is dependent on imports from Tanzania via Lake Tanganyika, and from Burundi via the border post of Kavimvira and the port of Kalundu. These sources supply local markets with basic produce such as maize flour, imported rice, and vegetable oil. The increase in fuel prices and the lack of road access will cause food shortages in the markets, especially for produce imported from neighboring countries such as Burundi, which will lead to increased prices for basic products. Poor and middle-income households are having difficulty accessing basic necessities.

Humanitarian assistance: According to the Maniema Food Security Cluster, no humanitarian response has been provided in Kabambare territory since the start of 2022, due to the lack of access routes. The lack of access, requirement for tips, and targeting by local authorities have resulted in nearly all partners ceasing activity in Kabambare territory.

Food consumption: This area is experiencing a food deficit due to lower local availability as a result of below-average production. The latest EFSA conducted by WFP in August 2021 estimated that 84 percent of households had poor or borderline food consumption scores, while 35 percent of households were experiencing severe hunger and only 14.3 percent of households had good dietary diversity. The poor performance of recent growing seasons has exacerbated the food consumption situation, which has been deteriorating over the years as a result of the ongoing conflicts and the impassability of agricultural access roads.

Livelihoods: The main source of household income in Kabambare is the sale of agricultural produce, followed by mining activities in the northern part of the territory (Salamabila), fishing on the Lukuga River, and goat farming. There is hardly any pig farming due to the very high Muslim population in the area. Around 20 percent of households are not interested in agricultural activities despite having access to land, preferring to engage in daily non-agricultural labor in mining operations. Most households in the area are therefore dependent, more or less directly, on the unpredictable harvests.

Assumptions

In addition to the assumptions at the national level, the most likely scenario from June 2022 to January 2023 in Kabambare territory is based on the following assumptions.

- **Agricultural production:** Agricultural activities in Kabambare territory will again be disrupted in season B, due to the active presence of armed groups and these activities being replaced by artisanal work in makeshift mines. The withdrawal from agricultural activities due to high displacement of the active population during season A (September to February) will undoubtedly lead to decreased agricultural production in this area. The limited access to fields due to violence by armed groups may result in reduced income for these households during the scenario period.

- **Agricultural and non-agricultural labor:** With the decline in mining activities in Kabambare territory following the closure of Banro Corporation's large mining operation in the area, the high supply of labor cannot be absorbed given the low demand from individual operators. A decrease in daily rate is therefore possible in the medium term. Supply of agricultural labor may improve due to the decline in the mining sector.

- **Plant diseases:** Attacks by armyworm have been observed on maize plants. These caterpillars ravage the whole crop, resulting in low production.

- **Fishing:** Due to fish diseases, the population will remain reluctant to consume fish.

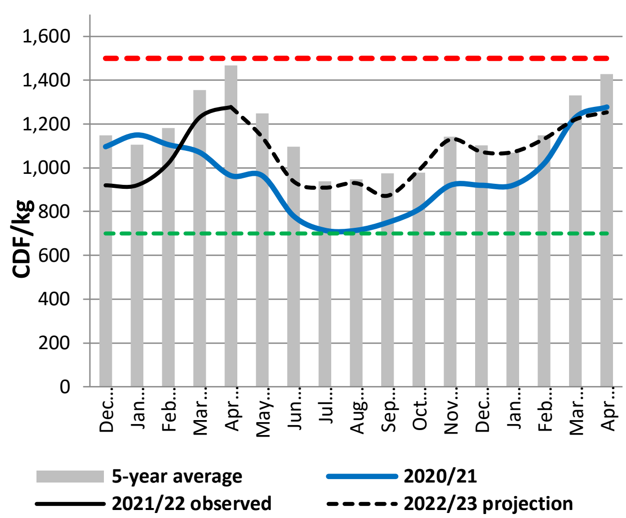
- **Climatic conditions:** According to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) estimates, most of the region will most likely experience average temperatures from June to September 2022. Based on the confidence of long-range forecasting models, average rainfall is most likely over most of southern Africa, including the DRC, from October 2022 to January 2023, which would result in a normal start to the season. Rainfall may be above average in January 2023 due to the La Niña conditions expected.

- **Small-scale cross-border trade:** The territory of Kabambare is landlocked, however there is trade with neighboring countries in the region through the neighboring provinces in Sud-Kivu (Fizi and Uvira), and through provinces in Tanganyika for trade via Lake Tanganyika. Trade flows in this territory are interconnected with the other territories, with the only access route being by road. The impassability of roads in the region will hinder trade throughout the area, and will reduce the availability of food in local markets that are more dependent on external flows.

- **Markets and projected prices:** Given the levels of season B harvest in the central east, imports from Tanzania and Burundi, local production, impassable roads, and a likely rise in fuel prices, there is expected to be a shortage of maize flour and other staples (rice, cassava, legumes, vegetable oil) in Kabambare and in Uvira market. As a result, maize flour prices will experience cyclical fluctuations from September 2022 to January 2023, and will be similar to prices in 2021 but above the five-year average (Figure 6).

- **Humanitarian assistance:** Kabambare territory is isolated due to the roads being impassable for several years and the clashes between different Mai Mai Malaika factions. As it is the only gateway to the province from Sud-Kivu and Tanganyika, this will impede access for humanitarian organizations.

Figure 6. Projected price of maize flour in Uvira



Source: *FEWS NET*

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

During the first two months of the first scenario period (June and July), household food consumption may improve and households may be able to rely on their own production for a very short period. After that, they will be dependent on market purchases for their food supplies and will experience food consumption deficits during the lean season (August and September). Poor households that have not taken part in agricultural activities will meet their food needs by adopting coping strategies in relation to food consumption. Therefore, most households in the territory will remain in Crisis (IPC Stage 3).

During the second scenario period (October to February), which will include the peak of the lean season in November, household food consumption may deteriorate until December, before improving slightly from mid-December onward with the green harvests from season A. There will be a significant food consumption deficit when stocks from the previous season are fully depleted. Most households will be in Crisis (IPC Stage 3).

Nutrition: The latest PRONANUT survey in the health districts of Kabambare and Kasongo in August 2021 showed prevalence of acute malnutrition above the emergency threshold, and in some cases severe acute malnutrition. Global acute malnutrition was 13.2 percent in Kabambare health district, and 14.7 percent in Salamabila health district. Increased violence by armed militia, which is preventing access to food sources, and the low availability of food in this area may have repercussions on the already compromised nutritional status of populations.

Events that Might Change the Outlook

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

Area	Event	Impact on food security outcomes
Kabambare	Engagement of active population in agriculture	As Kabambare territory is located in the Maniema Savannah Agriculture livelihood zone, engagement in agriculture could reduce food insecurity in the area.
	Restoration of agricultural access roads	It is critical to establish a maintenance team for the Bukavu–Kindu road, as it is the only current communication route linking the territory to the consumption center and sources of supply for various products. This would improve access to all agricultural production sites in the territory.
	Regularization of rainfall	A return to normal rains would make it possible to follow the agricultural calendar and avoid households having to complete successive sowings to compensate for irregular rainfall.
	Continued conflict between different factions (Mai Mai Malaika) in the territory	This could lead to a general outbreak of conflict and a deterioration in the security situation in the territory, which would prevent the arrival of investors in the mining sector.

OTHER AREAS OF CONCERN

Given the resurgence of conflict on the volcanic agricultural land in **Rutshuru** in Nord-Kivu province, FEWS NET is increasingly concerned about food insecurity in the area. Since March 2022, there has been a resurgence of violence in the western and southwestern parts of the territory, which has also disrupted agricultural activities for season B. This situation has caused significant population movements. According to the latest figures from the civil protection service, approximately 90,000 people from the health districts of Rwanguba, Rutshuru, and Kiberizi have been displaced, including 18,000 people from Bunagana who have crossed the border into Uganda. Despite this uncertain security situation, humanitarian actors continue to operate in the area. However, some locations targeted for assessment and intervention, including those between Burayi and Bunagana, remain inaccessible.

The current situation in Rutshuru territory is significantly reducing the production capacity of households in this territory, which was once considered the breadbasket of the northern region. In addition, armed groups involved in the conflict are preventing people from accessing sites. This is reducing the level of humanitarian assistance, and exposing affected populations to food shortages and loss of income, particularly among displaced households who have not had access to land and harvests for the second consecutive season. As fields are often occupied and looted by rebel forces, there will continue to be low availability of food and goods in the markets, especially since the entry point at the Bunagana border will remain closed, as will the road linking Rutshuru to Lubero territory.

Given poor season B harvests and the loss of assets among displaced households, the area is expected to be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) until January 2023. From the early onset of the lean season in August, a minority of households — particularly those who have not been able to harvest anything and who have to adopt survival strategies such as going a day and night without food — will face Emergency (IPC Phase 4) from August 2022 to January 2023.

ABOUT SCENARIO DEVELOPMENT

To project food security outcomes, FEWS NET develops a set of assumptions about likely events, their effects, and the probable responses of various actors. FEWS NET analyzes these assumptions in the context of current conditions and local livelihoods to arrive at a most likely scenario for the coming eight months. Learn more here.