



Published on *Famine Early Warning Systems Network* (<http://www.fews.net>)

Central Asia

Afghanistan

This country is monitored by local FEWS NET staff

Key Message Update

Limited labor opportunities, conflict-induced displacement, and mass repatriation remain key drivers of food insecurity as lean months begin

January 2017

Key Messages:

Although 2016 agricultural production was generally favorable in most areas, several factors have prevented many poor and displaced households from stocking normally for the winter and lean season, including limited labor opportunities and extensive conflict which has induced displacement and restricted market access and normal livelihoods activities. Many poor and displaced households have not been able to stock normally for the winter and lean season, and are likely to face food consumption gaps until spring labor opportunities become available. Although there are households facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) in many parts of the country, areas of greatest concern include Ghor, Hilmand, Badakhshan, Kunduz, and Nangarhar Provinces.

Precipitation during the first months of the 2016/2017 wet season (October – December) was below average throughout the country. This led to delayed planting in many areas, and in some areas farmers did not plant winter wheat due to lack of soil moisture. However, a substantial increase in precipitation throughout most of the country during the last two weeks of January has increased snowpack in all basins monitored. Water from snowmelt is likely to be sufficient for 2017 irrigated wheat production in all major production areas. Although there remains a broad spread of plausible precipitation outcomes for the remainder of the season, forecast models indicate that the most likely scenario is for average to above-average precipitation from February through April.

Casual labor demand for non-agricultural work has declined during the past two years, due to factors including reduced international investment and assistance, as well as the withdrawal of many ISAF forces since late 2014. In some markets monitored, wage rates have also declined. Reduced labor demand has limited income-earning opportunities for poor households, increasing their dependence on agricultural production and labor and limiting their capacity to stock adequately for the lean season.

In 2016, approximately 580,000 people were internally displaced by conflict. Additionally, an estimated 670,000 Afghanistan nationals who were living in Pakistan without legal documentation returned to Afghanistan. Although some of the returnees and displaced people have received assistance from humanitarian agencies, many have not accessed humanitarian

assistance amidst the rapid increase in needs and continued conflict environment, and are likely facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes as they enter the lean season, with few prospects for income generating activities prior to spring.

Region Contact Information:

Email: fews.afghanistan@fews.net

Source URL: <http://www.fews.net/central-asia/afghanistan/key-message-update/january-2017>

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.

