GUATEMALA, EL SALVADOR AND HONDURAS
TRI-NATIONAL BORDER FEDERATION OF RÍO LEMPA (MTFRL)

OVERVIEW

This acute food insecurity analysis was an update of the projection period of June - August 2021, that corresponds to the lean season, and includes four micro-regions of the Trifinio Region: Cayaguanca, Ch’ortí’, Güija and Ocotepeque, with a total analysed population of 486,000 people.

The update has resulted in changes to the population estimates, but the classifications have remained the same. The proportion of people in high acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) remains constant, with Ocotepeque showing no change with what was expected for Cayaguanca and Ch’ortí’ increased, while that in Güija decreased, of people in high acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) in this period in the analysis conducted in November 2020.

The update has resulted in changes to the population estimates, but the classifications have remained the same. The proportion of people in high acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) in Cayaguanca and Ch’ortí’ increased, while that in Güija decreased, with Ocotepeque showing no change with what was expected for this period in the analysis conducted in November 2020.

Overall, 33% of the population is in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) or above. This analysis took place in a context where COVID-19 cases and mortality have increased at departmental levels and continue to be a key driver in the slow economic recovery and migration constraints that restrict the local cross-border economy. In the Ch’ortí’ micro-region, which is the most affected, the lean season started early, due to the damage caused by the passage of hurricanes ETA and IOTA.

Throughout the territory, sources of income have been reduced due to the end of the coffee and grain harvesting period, and the late onset of the rainy season, which also impacts agricultural activity for Primera planting, forcing small producers to use savings or reduce planting areas. Other employment options are constrained by high public transport costs due to biosecurity measures put in place by governments around the COVID-19 pandemic. Food stocks are depleted or will be depleted by August 2021. The situation is exacerbated by the slow recovery of the economy weakened by the crisis generated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the damage caused by hurricanes ETA and IOTA to the staple grain harvest in 2020, and the rising prices of the food that makes up the Trifinio Region’s food basket.

Key Drivers

COVID-19
Containment measures for the mitigation of the COVID-19 pandemic have been reduced; however, people’s mobility remains constrained by high transport costs to access markets, workplaces, and basic services, and the local economy has yet to recover. Government biosecurity requirements at border crossings affect the movement of workers and traders in the Trifinio region. The number of cases continues to increase and vaccination coverage is low in Guatemala and Honduras.

Loss of income
Households have reduced incomes, mainly due to loss of employment, wages, and low profitability in informal trade-related activities; this limits access to basic services and food, and increases the use of household livelihood coping strategies.

Depletion of food stocks
During this period, stocks of locally produced staple grains are depleted or will be depleted by August 2021. The situation is exacerbated by the slow recovery of the economy weakened by the crisis generated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the damage caused by hurricanes ETA and IOTA to the staple grain harvest in 2020, and the rising prices of the food that makes up the Trifinio Region’s food basket.

Delayed onset of rainy season
Rainfall has been irregular in the region, with the rainy season starting late in the Güija micro-region and in part of Ch’ortí’ not yet started; in these areas, the absence of rainfall for prolonged periods has had an impact on the start of Primera planting and puts agricultural activity at risk.
PROJECTED SITUATION MAP AND POPULATION TABLE (JUNE-AUGUST 2021)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Micro-region</th>
<th>Total population analysed</th>
<th>Phase 1</th>
<th>Phase 2</th>
<th>Phase 3</th>
<th>Phase 4</th>
<th>Phase 5</th>
<th>Area Phase</th>
<th>Phase 3 +</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>#people</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>#people</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>#people</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>#people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cayaguanca</td>
<td>12,053</td>
<td>7,834</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>2,772</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1,446</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chorti</td>
<td>220,002</td>
<td>33,000</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>70,401</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>103,401</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>13,200</td>
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<td>Guija</td>
<td>172,027</td>
<td>77,412</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>68,811</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>24,084</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1,720</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ocotepeque</td>
<td>81,444</td>
<td>40,722</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>24,333</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>13,845</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2,443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>485,526</td>
<td>158,969</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>166,417</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>142,777</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>17,364</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Response Priorities

• Manage social protection support to reduce consumption gaps in populations in Emergency (Phase 4).
• Coordinate response support with local partners to reduce consumption gaps in populations in Crisis or Emergency (Phase 3 or 4), in order to save lives.
• Monitor the actions generated to mitigate further damage, protect and recover the livelihoods of the population in Stressed, Crisis or Emergency situations (Phases 2, 3 or 4), as a risk prevention measure.
• Submit to the MTFRL Board of Directors, regional bodies, international agencies, national FNS governing bodies, local governments and partners, the analysis update report, accompanied by an immediate response proposal for their information, validation and implementation.
• Monitor the situation of prices, household incomes and food sources, as well as that of COVID-19 and its effects on the MTFRL region as elements for future analysis.
• Give continuity to the Tri-national Food and Nutrition Surveillance System -SITVAN- in the MTFRL, ensuring the availability of information, prioritising indicators of food consumption, changes in livelihoods, nutritional status and mortality, in order to support a next analysis with new periods of validity at the end of 2021.
• In the short term, evaluate scenarios and measures implemented according to the evolution of COVID-19, in order to identify possible threats and vulnerability in the population.

Risk Factors to Monitor

• Prices of basic food basket items, essential agricultural inputs and public transport.
• Livelihood conditions, considering agricultural and non-agricultural employment demand, and remittance flows.
• Incidence of COVID-19 and respiratory diseases, and other vector-borne diseases, due to their possible impact and co-infection, which could generate health alerts.
• Extreme weather conditions in the MTFRL region, drought, increased rainfall, landslide and flooding, which could affect agricultural production, and limit transport and mobility of people.
• Performance of crops in the Trifinio Region’s agricultural cycle, mainly maize and beans.
PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY

The analysis was conducted virtually on 15-16 June 2020, with the participation of 15 MTFRL partner institutions, following the IPC approach in a four-step process: planning, preparation, analysis and summary. This modality allowed compliance with the IPC Version 3.0 protocols and ensured that the parameters of the analysis were applied throughout the process.

Four analysis groups were formed, one for each micro-region analysed. Information on contributing factors associated with the assumptions, including rainfall, food and fuel prices, and COVID-19 mortality incidence and vaccination coverage, as well as results on under-five nutritional status, were made available, all of which were necessary to carry out the update based on IPC evidence requirements for analysis updates.

What is the IPC and IPC Acute Food Insecurity?

The IPC is a set of tools and procedures to classify the severity and characteristics of acute food and nutrition crises as well as chronic food insecurity based on international standards. The IPC consists of four mutually reinforcing functions, each with a set of specific protocols (tools and procedures). The core IPC parameters include consensus building, convergence of evidence, accountability, transparency and comparability. The IPC analysis aims at informing emergency response as well as medium and long-term food security policy and programming.

For the IPC, Acute Food Insecurity is defined as any manifestation of food insecurity found in a specified area at a specific point in time of a severity that threatens lives or livelihoods, or both, regardless of the causes, context or duration. It is highly susceptible to change and can occur and manifest in a population within a short amount of time, as a result of sudden changes or shocks that negatively impact on the determinants of food insecurity.

Contact for further Information

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Classification of food insecurity and malnutrition was conducted using the IPC protocols, which are developed and implemented worldwide by the IPC Global Partnership - Action Against Hunger, CARE, CILSS, EC-JRC, FAO, FEWSNET, Global Food Security Cluster, Global Nutrition Cluster, IGAD, Oxfam, PROGRESAN-SICA, SADC, Save the Children, UNICEF and WFP.