

Famine Early Warning Systems Network

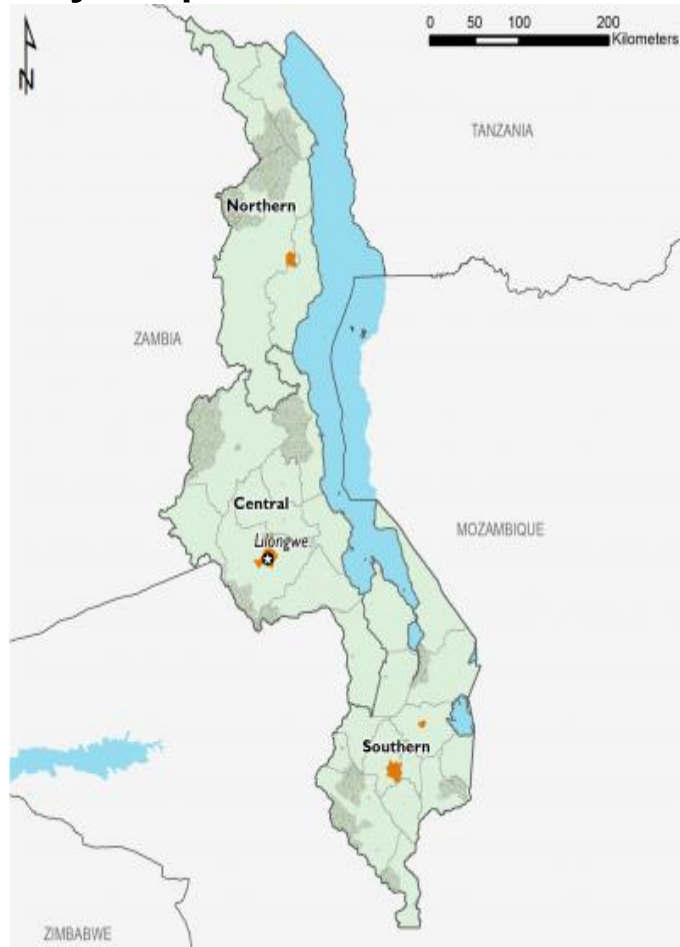
Southern Africa

Malawi

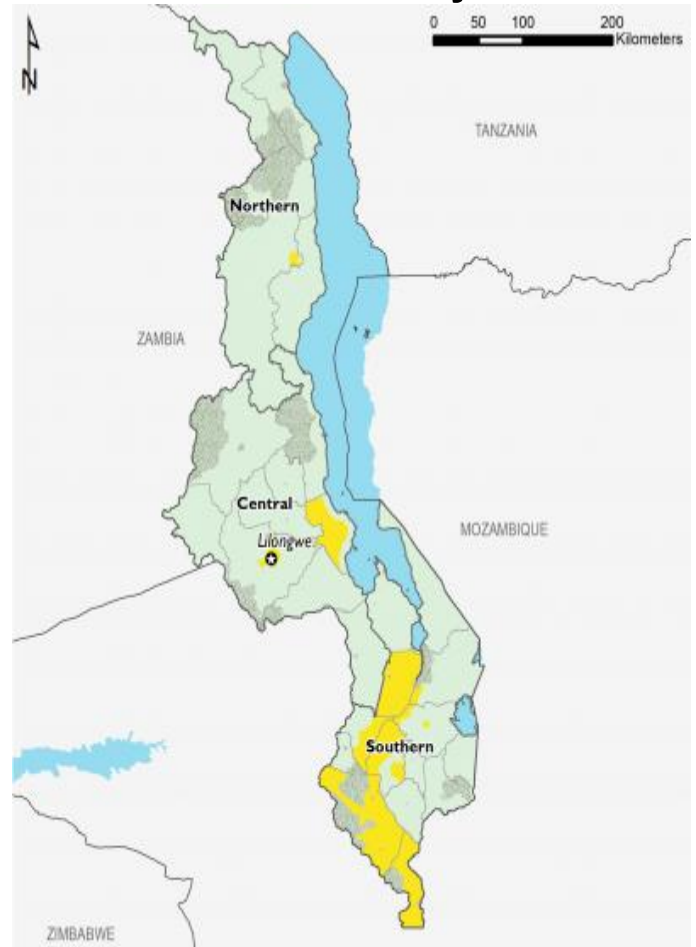
Key Message Update

Impacts of COVID-19 cause food and income gaps for the urban poor

July - September 2020



October 2020 - January 2021



IPC v3.0 Acute Food Insecurity Phase

- 1: Minimal
- 2: Stressed
- 3: Crisis
- 4: Emergency
- 5: Famine
- National Parks/Reserves

Would likely be at least one phase worse without current or programmed humanitarian assistance

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.

July 2020

Key Messages:

Due to an above normal production year, most rural households are experiencing Minimal (IPC Phase 1) outcomes as they consume food from own production and earn income from cash crop sales. However, poor households in urban and peri-urban areas of Blantyre, Zomba, Lilongwe, and Mzuzu continue to face food and income gaps due to disruption of their normal livelihood activities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Given impacts of COVID-19 globally and the general economic slowdown within Malawi, disruptions to typical formal employment, labor availability, and trading are causing many poor households to be earning little or no income. As a result, Crisis (IPC Phase 3) food security outcomes are expected in Malawi's four major cities.

Between June 30 and July 30, 2020, the total COVID-19 caseload in Malawi rose from 1,265 positive cases and 16 associated deaths to 3,858 cases and 107 deaths, with cases also beginning to emerge in rural areas. At the same time, concern is mounting among citizens and among local government authorities, who recently issued revised guidance including reiterating social distancing protocols, suspending mobile markets, and strengthening enforcement of other measures. This is expected to increase constraints in employment, business, and other income-earning activities. Though enforcement ability in rural areas remains limited, increased and prolonged control measures would likely mean prolonged impacts on economic activity and Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes in urban areas past September 2020.

Prices for the maize staple remained stable in June, as per typical seasonal trends, in most of the markets across the country. This is largely due to favorable market supplies from the harvests that took place in the April to June 2020 period. Despite this, maize grain prices in June 2020 were trending between 6 to 43 percent higher than the same time last year and 9 to 41 percent higher than the five-year average. In Mitundu market (the national reference market), prices for maize grain increased 9.8 percent between May and June to reach MWK 163 per kilogram, as traders from other markets and Lilongwe City are buying maize grain in bulk to stock for future sales. Prices at Mitundu market in June were 30 percent higher than the same time last year and 34 percent higher than the five-year average.

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<https://fews.net/southern-africa/malawi/key-message-update/july-2020>

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