KEY MESSAGES

- In June, Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes are likely in urban areas and in rural areas recently affected by floods or landslides, while Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are likely in Karamoja sub region. The start of the bimodal harvest is driving nationwide improvement in food availability and beginning to lead to a decline in staple food prices. However, movement restrictions to prevent the spread of COVID-19 continue to constrain household income sources and food access.

- As of June 30, the Ministry of Health confirmed a total of 893 COVID-19 cases among Ugandan nationals with a near-90 percent recovery rate and zero case fatality rate. Additionally, UNHCR has reported 52 confirmed cases among refugees. The GoU eased most lockdown measures in early June, but 12 districts – including Adjumani, Arua, and Moyo, which host large refugee settlements – remain under lockdown due to higher clusters of COVID-19 cases.

- The food security impacts of the March to June lockdown include declines in business activity, labor demand, and domestic and export demand for agricultural products, leading to below-normal household income from casual and agricultural labor, petty trade, and other informal income sources. Despite the gradual easing of movement restrictions, the economic slowdown is forecast to persist into next year. In urban areas, poor households will continue to have difficulty earning enough income to purchase both their food and non-food needs, even though cereal prices are declining with the first season harvest. Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes are likely to persist in most urban areas through January. In Kampala, where rural-urban linkages are weakest, some poor households may be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3).

- In rural areas, food availability and access are seasonally improving for poor households in bimodal areas, where the average to slightly below-average first season harvests began in June. Although Minimal (IPC Phase 1) outcomes are widespread, areas affected by floods or landslides during the first rainfall season are likely to remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2) due to crop losses and below-normal income from labor or crop sales. In Karamoja, food security has deteriorated to Crisis (IPC Phase 3) due to the delayed, below-average main season harvest combined with below-normal household income and reduced interannual safety nets resulting from COVID-19 movement restrictions. Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are expected until September, when the availability of the short-cycle cereal harvest will most likely drive improvement to Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes.

- According to UNHCR and WFP, the refugee response in Uganda is facing a challenge of underfunding. WFP reduced monthly food assistance from a full ration to a 70 percent ration in April. Available information indicates that WFP will continue to deliver a 70 percent ration through September and will reduce the monthly ration to 60 percent from October to January. Since refugees’ dependence on food assistance is very high and COVID-19 movement restrictions are limiting their access to income sources, most refugee households are expected to have food consumption gaps indicative of Crisis! (IPC Phase 3!) from July to October. From November to January, increasing freedom of movement to access income sources and the second season harvests will most likely result in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes. Uganda currently hosts 1,425,040 refugees and is welcoming an additional 3,000 refugees from the DRC.
NATIONAL OVERVIEW

Current Situation

**COVID-19 pandemic:** The COVID-19 pandemic presents a risk of direct and indirect impacts on food insecurity in Uganda. To date, available evidence suggests that the direct health impacts of COVID-19 on food security have likely been mitigated by a nationwide lockdown enacted from May to June. However, the indirect impacts resulting from movement restrictions are high. As of June 30, the Ministry of Health confirmed a total of 893 COVID-19 cases with the WHO, representing a positive test rate of approximately 0.5 percent. Of the confirmed COVID-19 cases, the known case fatality rate is zero. The cumulative case count does not include refugees or foreigners, but UNHCR reports 52 confirmed cases among refugees with a 92 percent recovery rate. Given that less than one percent of the national population has been tested, the scale of the outbreak is likely higher than reported; however, anecdotal evidence does not suggest that the outbreak is more severe in any given area. Among households that are exposed to or contract COVID-19, quarantine or hospitalization may cause a loss of income or ability to engage in productive livelihood activities during that period of time.

Widespread lockdown restrictions from March to June led to an increase in food security. Business activity, labor demand, and domestic and export demand for agricultural products declined, leading to reduced household income from casual labor, petty trade, crop sales, and other informal income sources. Refugee settlements were subject to lockdown measures similar to the rest of the country. In Karamoja sub region, Karenga, Kaabong, Moroto, and Amudat districts were also subject to lockdown measures. The government of Uganda (GoU) began to ease restrictions in June, but many public spaces remain closed, including markets, bars, shopping centers, schools, and institutions of higher learning. Lockdown restrictions remain in place in 12 border districts, including Adjumani, Amuru, Arua, Buikwe, Bulisa, Busia, Gulu, Kyotera, Moyo, Nebbi, Rakai, and Zombo. These areas are hotspots with relatively higher clusters of COVID-19 among refugees and nationals. In June, the easing of some public transportation restrictions and re-opening of businesses in urban areas – with adherence to standard operating procedures to limit the spread of COVID-19 – are beginning to drive some economic recovery. However, many urban households who rely on micro-businesses or self-employment in the informal sector face shortages of capital and low customer demand after the prolonged lockdown.

In rural areas, COVID-19 movement restrictions were put into place after the start of first season production activities. Available information suggests that restrictions did not reduce planted area on a large scale. However, some farmers reported a lack of access to quality agricultural inputs, including seeds, due to movement restrictions on public and private transport that made physical access to markets to purchase inputs more difficult. Agro-veterinary stores and dealers, as well as public and private extension services, continued to operate. However, the disruption of supply chains between wholesalers and retailers, coupled with the decline in farmers’ access to markets, has gradually led to reduced aggregate demand for agricultural inputs. According to key informants, the closure of weekly/monthly livestock markets also reduced income from livestock sales, though slaughter and farmgate sales have been permitted.

**Seasonal performance and agricultural production:** Erratic rainfall distribution during the March to May first season rains...
led to floods and mixed first-season crop production prospects. In bimodal areas, rainfall ranged from 10-100 mm above-average in Northern, Eastern, and Central regions to 10-50 mm below-average in Western region (Figure 1). An early rainfall onset prompted some farmers to commence plowing and planting activities by early March. However, short periods of high-intensity rain followed by dry spells led to floods, mudslides, and river overflows in some areas and crop moisture stress in other areas (Figure 2). In some areas, the rains ended earlier than usual in May. Floods and mudslides occurred in 48 districts, of which Kasese, Bundibugyo, Ntoroko, Rukungiri, Kanungu, Kamwenge, Wakiso, Mayuge, and Nakasongola were among the worst affected. Crop losses were localized in most cases, but these hazards displaced over 80,220 people countrywide, damaged household assets and livestock, inundated grazing areas and farmland, and damaged public infrastructure. Flooding of the Victoria, Albert, and Kyoga lakes affected an estimated 516,566 people and caused at least 43 deaths and 260 injuries. Water in Lakes Victoria and Kyoga in Central region reached their highest levels since 1964.

In areas where farmers experienced crop losses in April or May due to below-average or erratic rainfall, waterlogging, or floods, the harvest is below average. However, crop losses in these areas are being offset by above-average yields in other areas in terms of net national production. The green and dry harvests became available to households as early as late May because of the early start of season. Harvesting of cereals and legumes is more advanced in southwestern Uganda and gradually spreading to central, eastern, and northern Uganda. Dry spells affected crops planted in late March through early April, especially in the southwest, reducing their growth and vigor and causing wilting. Crops planted in mid-April are doing better, attaining 45-75 percent growth in June according to satellite-derived crop modeling data; however, subsiding rainfall is hindering progress to maturity.

In Karamoja, where crop production relies on one rainfall season from April to September, the start of season has been marked by similar rainfall patterns to the bimodal areas. Cumulative rainfall is above average with erratic distribution, leading to waterlogging in some areas and delaying planting in other areas. Poor access to quality seeds and erratic rains dictate below-normal crop production prospects.

As of late June, the scale of crop damage caused by desert locusts in northeastern Uganda is localized, occurring mainly in parts of Teso, western Karamoja, and Acholi in April and May. Swarms spotted earlier in the season moved out of Uganda, were successfully controlled, or naturally died. According to FAO and ICPAC, however, there remains a risk that new swarms may enter northeastern Uganda from Kenya. Overall, the associated risk of damage to crops is declining in bimodal areas, where crops are maturing, but remains high in Karamoja, where planting is still underway and crops are in the growth stages. With 87 percent of funding already secured for the desert locust response, contingency plans are in place to implement surveillance and control measures. Fall Armyworm incidence in maize crops is lower than in recent years. The pest is present in maize crop fields in Karamoja and in Central and Western regions. A combination of improved farmers’ capacity to implement control measures, recent heavy rains, and staggered planting most likely explain the low incidence.

Heavy rains in April and early May resulted in plentiful pasture and water for livestock, characterized by above-normal
vegetation conditions in early June. Vegetation conditions are currently better than the same period of 2019 but exhibit a declining trend due to subsiding rainfall (Figure 3). The rains have supported average to above-average livestock production of milk and meat products since early 2020, except in areas where foot and mouth and other livestock diseases are endemic, such as the cattle corridor districts and Karamoja.

**Markets and trade:** Demand for agricultural products is below normal, due to the limited activity of institutions like restaurants/hotels and boarding schools, a decline in household demand in urban areas, and a decline in export trade volumes. In urban areas, the decline in household demand is attributed to declining consumption among poor households who are earning less income due to the economic impacts of the recent movement restrictions. The closure of border crossing points and markets in border towns, heavy truck clearance requirements, and delays associated with mandatory COVID-19 testing of truck drivers has broadly restricted cross-border trade to formal flows. Informal trade in staple commodities is lower than usual due to difficulties adapting to the new restrictions on transportation. Additionally, although formal exports and imports of staple food and other commodities continue, data from multiple sources indicate that trade volumes and transactions from April to June declined. The decline is attributed to regional supply chain disruptions in source and destination markets, business uncertainty in destination markets, and the business risks associated with varying preventive measures across countries.

The decline in aggregate demand has affected trader profits, who have passed this down to farmers. Farmgate prices are low for cooking bananas, sweet potatoes, cassava, horticultural products like tomatoes, and livestock products like eggs, milk, and live exotic chicken. As a result, farmers’ income from seasonal crop sales is low, which has trickled down to result in lower demand for poor rural and urban laborers in the agricultural sector. Other disruptions to better-off farmers in the livestock and poultry value chains have similarly led to reduced demand for labor that poor households rely on for income. For example, lower demand for maize flour has had the side effect of reducing the supply of maize bran available for livestock and chicken feed, which raised the cost of livestock production even as chicken meat and egg prices sharply declined.

Due to lower demand, falling farmgate prices, and the gradual availability of first-season bean and maize harvests, the price hikes that were observed after the onset of COVID-19 due to panic buying, government purchases, and speculation are beginning to dissipate, especially for cereals. Food availability is improving at the household level, while markets are restocking with both new and old stocks. Perennial staple foods are also available, such as bananas, sweet potatoes, and cassava. As a result, retail staple food prices declined in several key reference markets from April to May. Bean prices declined by 8-17 percent in Lira, Masindi, Gulu, Soroti, and Tororo and remained stable in Kampala and Mubende. Cassava prices similarly declined in Arua, Lira, and Tororo and remained stable in Kampala and Soroti; however, prices rose in Gulu, Masindi, and Mubende. In comparison to the five-year average, staple cereal prices range from near to below average. However, retail bean prices remain atypically high given low supply after the below-average November/December harvests and prior to the June/July harvest (Figure 4).

**Current food security outcomes**

During the lockdown period from late March to June, food insecurity among poor, urban households deteriorated to Stressed (IPC Phase 2) because of below-normal income and concurrently high staple food prices in March and April, though prices have begun to decline in May. In Kampala, some poor, urban households that lack savings, have limited coping capacity, and...
experienced a reduction or loss of income may be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3). Outside of Kampala, however, most poor households in urban areas have stronger rural linkages and easier access to their rural families, who have been able to offer support through own-produced food. Overall, market price data and inflation data from the Uganda Bureau of Statistics suggest that household food access was lowest in April, when headline and food inflation spiked due to the rising cost of food and non-food items during the lockdown (Figure 5). Inflation began to decline in May, most likely in response to declining aggregate demand and the start of the June/July harvest. At the market, the availability of staple foods and fruits at seasonally lower prices is increasing. With the easing of movement restrictions, household access to food is gradually beginning to improve. However, daily wages remain below normal and most poor, urban households remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2).

In most bimodal areas, the majority of rural households who rely on own-produced crops are able access their minimum foods from the green harvest in June, sustaining Minimal (IPC Phase 1) outcomes. However, Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes are likely in areas affected by the impact of flooding and waterlogging, such as in Bundibugyo and Ntoroko. In these areas, the loss of crops due to inclement weather combined with below-normal income is limiting households’ ability to access their essential non-food needs. Additionally, since restrictions are still affecting marketing activities in rural areas, combined with supply chain disruptions and reduced aggregate demand, farming households are earning below-average income from crop sales. Overall, however, the increasing availability of food stocks as the first season harvest progresses is replenishing both household and market stocks and leading to a decline in staple food prices compared to April.

Poor households in Karamoja are experiencing limited food and income sources. Although food is available in the markets in all the nine districts, below-normal income is limiting household food access. While vehicles are allowed to carry cargo within and out of the districts, movement restrictions and the closure of livestock markets, restaurants, schools, and social gatherings have significantly affected income-earning opportunities. Typical livelihood activities used to access food, including petty trading, sale of firewood and charcoal, domestic labor opportunities in urban centers, brewing, and sales of dregs are all atypically low. While limited livestock sales and slaughter are permissible in the districts not under a Foot and Mouth Disease quarantine, prices obtained are below market prices. In Kotido, Moroto, Nakapiripirit, Napak, and Abim districts, where a quarantine is still in place, sales are low. Karamoja is also experiencing insecurity characterized by livestock thefts, raids, and loss of life. Poor households have food consumption gaps and are engaging in stressed or crisis coping strategies indicative of Crisis (IPC Phase 3). A more detailed analysis is provided in the ‘Area of Concern’ section below.

According to UNHCR/OPM, Uganda hosted 1,425,040 refugees and asylum seekers as of June 30. Although refugee arrivals have been suspended since March to prevent the spread of COVID-19, about 3,056 refugees are now being permitted to enter Uganda, with a mandatory 14-day quarantine before being resettled. Refugees are integrated into the implementation of national and district level COVID-19 preparedness and response plans, and the GoU pays for quarantine and referral hospital treatment centers with partner support. Since April, refugees living in settlements have received a reduced, 70 percent ration. WFP began to deliver cash assistance to Kampala-based refugees in June, targeting about 80,000 refugees with an equivalent of three months’ worth of cash to mitigate the socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19 restrictions. Due to movement restrictions, access to other sources of income are even lower than usual. In June, however, about 40 percent of refugee households with access to arable land in the settlements are already accessing green harvests to supplement their food assistance. Given the availability of the harvest and delivery of a 70 percent ration, Stressed! (IPC Phase 2!) outcomes are most likely. A more detailed analysis is provided in the ‘Area of Concern’ section below.

Assumptions

From June 2020 to January 2021, the most likely food security outcomes are based on the following key assumptions:

- Based on available information from the Ministry of Health and leading local and international health experts, including the WHO, the number of COVID-19 cases is likely to rise in the near term due to both the spread of the virus and increased testing. Available modeling projections suggest daily case incidence may peak between within the scenario period.

- Although there is uncertainty about the timing and evolution of movement restrictions in the 12 districts that have clusters of COVID-19 cases and face a risk of transborder spread, this scenario assumes that the government of Uganda will ease the severity of movement restrictions gradually. A curfew, social distancing measures, border closures, social gatherings, and market closures are assumed to remain in place across the country in the near term (1-3 months). Public transportation restrictions are expected to remain in place in the medium term (3-6 months) in interior areas of Uganda and throughout the scenario period in select border districts and high-risk districts.

- Based on the World Bank’s forecast, real GDP growth in Uganda is expected to decelerate from 6.5 percent in FY2019 to 3.5 percent in FY2020/2021, driven by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on declining private consumption, private
investment, and exports. Private consumption is expected to contract from 8.0 percent in FY2019 to 1.6 percent over FY2020-FY2021, and demand for services, agricultural products, and construction sectors is likely to be below normal. Although household income from casual labor, agricultural labor, and petty trade is expected to recover gradually as movement restrictions are lifted, income from these activities will remain below normal through January.

- Based on the NOAA/CPC NMME, ECMWF C3S, and GHACOF forecasts, the main rainfall season from April to September in Karamoja is most likely to be above average.

- Based on the NOAA/CPC NMME and ECMWF C3S forecasts, the second rainfall season from August to November in bimodal areas is most likely to be below normal. There is uncertainty in the forecast due to the slightly elevated likelihood of La Niña and negative Indian Ocean Dipole conditions and due to the long-term nature of this forecast.

- Based on the rainfall and wind forecasts and vegetation conditions, the forecasts produced by the FAO’s Desert Locust Watch and ICPAC indicate that some desert locust swarms could transit northeastern Uganda from Kenya en route to Sudan. The risk of damage to crops is expected to decline after the June-September harvests and then remain low through January. Surveillance and control measures are expected to be deployed in the event of future swarms.

- Based on current crop development, the national first season harvest is most likely to be average or slightly below average. In northeastern Uganda, some localized crop damage from desert locusts may result in a below-average harvest. In flood-affected areas such as the Lake Victoria basin, the harvest will likely be below average.

- In Karamoja, the main season harvest in September/October is expected to be delayed and below average due to delayed planting, below-normal area planted, poor access to seeds, erratic rainfall distribution, and waterlogging.

- Based on the favorable rainfall forecast, the second season harvest in November/December is expected to be average. On the sub-national level, however, second-season crop production may be constrained in some of the areas recently affected by floods. Poor households may have a diminished capacity to afford seeds and agricultural inputs after earning below-normal income from crop sales due to the below-average first-season harvest and low farmgate prices.

- Regional and local supply chain functioning will likely remain below normal due to varying border crossing requirements and movement restrictions on informal trade. Based on below-normal informal trade and the assumption that aggregate demand for agricultural products will remain below-normal, farmgate prices are expected to remain below normal and the cost of livestock feed is expected to be above normal. Reductions in income from crop sales and increased expenditures on inputs among better-off farming households will likely continue to suppress agricultural labor demand during the second crop production season. Agricultural labor income will likely be below normal.

- The arrival of the first season harvest in June/July, coupled with low aggregate domestic demand and export demand for agricultural products, is expected to drive retail staple food prices down from above-average to near-average levels.

- Due to the closure of Uganda’s international borders, new refugee arrivals from South Sudan and the DRC will likely continue to be restricted in the near- and medium-term.

- Due to funding shortfalls for humanitarian food assistance to refugees, WFP has instituted ration cuts of 30 percent for all beneficiaries except those that arrived less than three months ago. In the absence of more funding for food assistance, monthly rations are likely to be sustained at 70 percent through September and reduced to 60 percent by October.

**Most Likely Food Security Outcomes**

In bimodal areas of Uganda, first season harvests in June and second season harvests in November are expected to improve food availability and access among farming households and those that depend on purchases to meet their food needs. Typically, a poor household harvests enough food stocks to last 1.5-2 months with consumption smoothing before supplementation from market purchases. Increased supplies and availability of harvests are expected to drive staple food prices downward, based on post-harvest seasonal trends. However, due to the continuation of some COVID-19 restrictions in the near term and below-normal aggregate demand for food locally and regionally, farmers are likely to continue to earn below-average income from crop sales. In urban areas, despite the gradual recovery of the economy and business activity, poor, urban households are most likely to continue to earn below-normal daily wage income in the informal sector. Overall, subsistence farming households are expected to be able to maintain Minimal (IPC Phase 1) food security outcomes based on food and income from crop production and the ability to cope through sales of poultry or livestock. However, Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes are likely to prevail in areas where floods or landslides disrupted livelihoods, resulting in a below-average first season harvest. Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes are also likely in many urban areas, where COVID-19 restrictions will
continue to limit household income sources and keep household consumption expenditures atypically low. In Kampala, where rural-urban linkages are weakest, some households could experience Crisis (IPC Phase 3).

In Karamoja, household food gaps are expected to widen at the peak of the lean season in June/July, driven by the impact of continued COVID-19 movement restrictions on household income. Labor seeking or self-employment activities will likely be constrained, including sales of firewood, charcoal, grass, and building poles and engagement in brewing, stone quarrying, and sand mining. Below-normal income and access to food are likely to be exacerbated by heightened insecurity that impedes livestock production. Additionally, the school feeding programs that typically benefit about 100,000 children are unlikely to resume as long as schools remain closed. Green harvests are expected in August/September, a month late, beginning in southern Karamoja and progressing northward. However, pasture and water resource availability is expected to be normal in response to the above-average rainfall, supporting livestock production. As a result of these factors, food security outcomes will likely be worse than previously anticipated, until the start of the harvest. Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are expected through September, but the availability of the harvest will most likely drive improvement to Stressed (IPC Phase 2) from October to January.

In refugee settlements, COVID-19 restrictions are likely to continue to constrain opportunities to engage in typical livelihood activities in the near term, which minimally supplement humanitarian food assistance in a typical year. Humanitarian food assistance is expected to remain the main source of food/income throughout the scenario period. Given the protracted limitations in their ability to earn income since March and the concurrent 30 percent cut to food assistance rations since April, refugee households are likely to increase their reliance on negative coping strategies or face food consumption gaps in the near term. Crisis! (IPC Phase 3!) outcomes are expected to emerge in refugee settlements from July to October. This classification indicates that food assistance will likely prevent Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes during this period. However, it is also expected that refugees’ freedom of movement to access income sources will gradually improve in the medium term as movement restrictions are lifted, supporting marginal improvements in their income and coping capacity. As a result, Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are likely from November to January, which coincides with the second season harvest.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Impact on food security outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>Delayed, below-average, or poorly distributed second season rainfall</td>
<td>In the event that La Niña conditions lead to below-average or irregular second season rainfall, below-average national crop production and below-normal agricultural labor demand would affect household income and market supply. While even below-average rainfall amounts typically produce enough crops to maintain adequate food availability for subsistence farmers, the decline in income could cause some households to be Stressed (IPC Phase 2).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karamoja sub region</td>
<td>Early end of rainfall season or erratic rainfall distribution from July to September</td>
<td>Poor rainfall performance during the second half of the season, particularly given the scale of delayed planting and replanting, would impact crops at the flowering and grain filling stage and lead to larger crop production deficits than currently anticipated. Due to reductions in weeding and harvesting labor in-kind/cash income and below-normal harvests, additional households would deteriorate to Crisis (IPC Phase 3) during the post-harvest period if markets remain closed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refugee settlements</td>
<td>A pipeline break in food assistance</td>
<td>In the event that funding constraints become more severe than anticipated and a pipeline break occurs between August and November, a further reduction in ration size or a delay in food distribution frequency could lead to Emergency (IPC Phase 4) between harvest periods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>An accelerated spread of COVID-19 among refugee settlements</td>
<td>An extension or reinstatement of lockdown measures, in combination with rising cases of COVID-19, would increase the risk of more severe food insecurity outcomes among refugee households given concurrent reductions in planned food assistance. Prolonged supply chain disruptions that sustain high food prices or widespread quarantines that prevent engagement in productive livelihood activities would sustain Crisis! (IPC Phase 3!) through January.</td>
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AREAS OF CONCERN

Central Sorghum and Livestock livelihood zone in Karamoja sub region (Figure 6)

Current Situation

In June, poor households in the Karamoja sub region are entering the June/July peak of the lean season. After a below-average 2019 harvest led to an early start of the 2020 lean season in February, poor households have already been relying on gathering wild vegetables on other foods, purchasing food from the market, and consumption-based coping for a longer period than usual. Households are now facing increasing difficulty accessing enough food to meet their minimum food needs, since the economic impact of COVID-19 movement restrictions continue to dampen demand for domestic work, causal labor, and agricultural labor. In general, the restrictions diminished income among better-off households who rely on income from livestock sales, restaurants, bars, and trade at weekly markets, which reduced their ability to hire poor households for seasonal labor. Additionally, aggregate demand for products typically sold by or involving poor households – including firewood, local brew, and charcoal – declined. Additionally, recent heavy rains have limited the collection, production, and sale of firewood and charcoal. Rudimentary gold and sand mining and some fishing are possible but offer limited access and expandability for most of the population. As a result, poor households’ income from labor is below normal. Further, WFP has been unable to provide school feeding programs due to closure of schools, which previously provided daily meals to over 130,000 school-going children as an interannual safety net.

The 2020 crop production season is affected by poor access to seeds and an erratic onset of the main April to September rainfall season. Desert locust swarms within Karamoja have declined in size due to control measures and onward migration. However, the threat to crop production persists due to the presence of locusts in neighboring Kenya according to information from FAO and key informants. Given that most households had few seed stocks leftover from the 2019 harvest and spent a high proportion of their income on food, household access to seeds and inputs has been below normal. Rainfall performance has also been defined by both heavy rains and dry spells, leading to crop losses and replanting (Figure 7). In Napak and Kotido districts, heavy rainfall in March and April resulted in waterlogging and destroyed early-planted crops. A two-week dry spell in early April and below-average rainfall in May further interrupted planting schedules and seasonal progress. As a result, total planted area is most likely below normal, while planting is staggered and delayed up to 3-6 weeks. Although above-average rainfall occurred in June, poor quality seeds used for planting are also compromising yield prospects. Crop vigor currently varies across the livelihood zone, depending on the timing of planting.

Due to the availability of adequate grazing resources, which have remained significantly above normal since January, livestock body conditions range from good to above normal and milk production is average. Water resources are seasonally average, given above-average but erratic rainfall since March. However, livestock production is limited by market closures, endemic livestock diseases and insecurity. Although there is an ongoing livestock quarantine against Foot and Mouth Disease in parts of Karamoja, households could only sell their animals at the farm gate since markets are closed. Prices are reportedly lower than if the animals had been driven to the markets, where competitive prices would be obtained. Available information on levels of insecurity in Karamoja indicates a higher level of insecurity since October 2019 compared to recent years, marked by loss of human life and livestock theft/raids. Insecurity is preventing access to some traditional grazing areas, which reduces access to pasture to a limited number of safe areas and congregates livestock in protected kraals, which creates a higher risk of disease transmission. Persistent insecurity in northern Karamoja is also likely to limit households’ use of oxen for plowing.
since oxen and other livestock have been driven to other areas for protection from livestock raids.

Household food access is mainly constrained by below-normal income that is limiting their consumption expenditures, since purchasing power, as measured by the terms of trade for sorghum, was generally higher in May compared to previous years. Although price trends from April to May were mixed, the retail price of sorghum in May was up to 35 percent below the five-average and up to 44 percent below prices recorded in May 2019 (Figure 8). Similarly, the firewood and charcoal-to-sorghum terms of trade (ToT) are above the five-year average in each key reference market except Kaabong, despite declines observed from April to May in Moroto, Napak, Kotido, and Kaabong (Figure 9). However, the ongoing heavy rains limit households’ ability to expand sales of firewood and charcoal.

Given diminished capacity to purchase their minimum food needs and limited livelihoods coping options available, many poor households in Karamoja are facing food consumption gaps indicative of Crisis (IPC Phase 3). The economic impact of the COVID-19 lockdown on household income opportunities has been significant, while the cost of replanting and prospects of a delayed, below-average short-cycle harvest have led to worse outcomes than previously anticipated. Based on historical trends, households who do not own livestock and have more limited access to milk are likely worse off than households who do own livestock. However, recent insecurity may be leading to a decline in food availability and access among livestock-owning households as well.

Assumptions

In addition to the national-level assumptions, the most likely food security outcomes for the Central Sorghum and Livestock livelihood zone are based on the following assumptions:

- According to the NOAA/CPC NMME forecast, the remainder of the April to September rainy season will most likely be above average.

- Based on early-season crop losses, delayed planting/replanting, and below-normal area planted, the short-cycle sorghum harvest is expected to be below normal and delayed. The green harvest is anticipated to be in August/September and the dry harvest in September/October. Typically, the short-cycle occurs in July/August and comprises a higher proportion of annual crop production. The long-cycle sorghum harvest is most likely to arrive on time in December/January, but may be below-average to near average based on below-normal area planted. Additionally, above-average rainfall typically leads to waterlogging, which tends to be associated with crop loss and a surge in diseases. The local bean harvest is similarly expected to be below average.

- Based on the assumption that current COVID-19 movement restrictions will remain in place in the medium term and continue to affect the local economy, labor demand is expected to remain below normal throughout the scenario period. Daily wage rates for agricultural labor are likely to remain stable or slightly decline in response, based on historical trends.

- Fall Armyworm damage and infestation is expected to be minimal with reduced populations due to variable weather patterns that have limited its capacity to reproduce and spread.

- Based on FEWS NET’s integrated price projections for the Kotido market, the availability of surplus supply in bimodal source markets and the arrival of the bimodal harvest in June/July and local harvest in September/October are expected to drive the retail price of sorghum grain to below-average levels. The price of a kg of sorghum is projected to decline by...
5-45 percent compared to the five-year average and by 10-40 percent compared to 2019 throughout the scenario period.

- Based on FEWS NET’s integrated price projections for the Kotido market, the below-average bean harvest in Karamoja and source markets in bimodal areas is expected to sustain above-average retail bean prices throughout the scenario period. Prices are most likely to be 5-35 percent above 2019 prices and 15-50 percent above the five-year average, peaking in June/July before the harvest and rising again until the second season bimodal harvest in December.

- Safety net programming is expected to remain suspended or limited through at least October. Implementation of the school feeding program by WFP is unlikely as long as schools remain closed and re-opening is uncertain. WFP’s Maternal Child Health and Nutrition Program is unlikely to continue due to funding constraints. A limited number of vulnerable households are expected to benefit from cash transfers for labor-intensive public works activities by NUSAF III.

**Most Likely Food Security Outcomes**

Prior to the harvest, COVID-19 movement restrictions will most likely continue to constrain household income, leaving most poor households unable to meet their minimum food needs. Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are expected to persist until the delayed and below-average dry harvest begins in September/October, though the start of the green harvest in August will gradually begin to reduce the proportion of households experiencing food consumption gaps. Expansion of alternative income sources or use of livelihoods coping mechanisms, which usually consist of strategies such as maximizing natural resource sales or pursuing migratory labor, will be more limited than previous years due to economic impact of the pandemic. Households are expected to continue to rely on consumption-based coping strategies, such as reduced meal size and frequency, and to rely on wild foods such as wild leaves and vegetables mixed with grains or flour purchased from the market. Some households may reach the maximum extent to which they can further intensify their consumption coping mechanisms. The prevalence of acute malnutrition among children under five years of age is expected to decline until the start of the green harvest in August but remain within Serious levels (GAM WHZ 10-14.9 percent), based on historical trends established by FSNA surveys.

After the arrival of the harvest in October, the availability of several months of food stocks is likely to lead to improvement to Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes through January. In a typical year, household food stocks would last three-six months; this year, households will most likely deplete food stocks from the below-average harvest earlier than usual, leading to an early start of the 2020 lean season in January or February. While the harvest will provide most households with enough food to meet their minimum food needs, below-normal levels of income will continue to constrain their ability to meet their non-food needs. Acute malnutrition prevalence is expected to seasonally improve due to increased food availability, but will most likely remain within typical, Serious (GAM WHZ 10-14.9 percent) levels due to chronic and non-food factors.

**Refugee settlements hosting refugees from South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Figure 10)**

**Current Situation**

According to UNHCR and the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), Uganda hosted over 881,282 and 415,118 refugees and asylum seekers from South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), respectively, as of June 30, 2020. Since March 22, the GoU has suspended the reception of new refugee arrivals in order to limit cross-border transmission of COVID-19. At the end of June, however, the GoU permitted at least 3,000 Congolese refugees to enter Uganda. Additional, unspecified numbers of refugees reportedly remain stranded near the Ugandan border. Irregular movement through porous border crossing points is likely.

As of June 30, a total of 52 COVID-19 cases have been confirmed among the refugee population. Treatment is provided in national hospitals and referral centers, paid for by the GoU. The GoU began to ease movement restrictions to limit the spread of COVID-19 in districts with refugee settlements in June; however, lockdown measures remain in place in Adjumani, Arua (Imvepi settlement), and Moyo (Palorinya settlement). Currently, restrictions broadly consist of curfew, border closures, market closures, half capacity on public transportation and private cars, and school closures. The new Congolese refugee arrivals will undertake mandatory 14-day quarantine, testing, and contact tracing before

![Figure 10. Location and population of refugee settlements in Uganda as of June 2020](source: UNHCR/OPM)
transitioning to a settlement.

After 30 percent reductions in food assistance ration sizes were implemented in April due to funding gaps, refugees have become increasingly at risk of worsening food insecurity. Refugee populations have a high dependency on humanitarian food assistance and typically earn little income from other sources even in a normal year. COVID-19 movement restrictions have further reduced their ability to supplement food assistance with other income sources, such as casual labor and petty trade activities. The movement restrictions disrupted the routine exchange of goods and services, led to reduced labor demand in host communities, and impeded physical access and mobility to income-earning opportunities. As a result, refugee households’ income from petty trade, casual or agricultural labor, food vending, or sales of food assistance or natural resource products is below normal. Although the severity of movement restrictions is beginning to be eased, the recovery of economic activity will be gradual.

WFP’s mitigation measures include two-month distribution cycles, pre-packaged food, and enforcement of physical distancing to lower the risk of transmission during distributions. 1.3 million refugees receive in-kind food assistance. Beginning in April, WFP scaled up the number of refugees receiving cash-based assistance instead of in-kind assistance to 516,232. Simultaneously, WFP is strengthening market monitoring activities to ensure cash transfer values are adjusted to respond to changing staple food prices at the market. Additionally, WFP changed the distribution frequency of acute malnutrition treatment programs from bi-weekly to monthly, while expanding the criteria for entry. WFP also resumed the Maternal Child Health and Nutrition Programme in May, distributing two-month rations of SuperCereal Plus to prevent stunting among pregnant and lactating women and children aged 6-23 months. According to UNHCR/GoU, the arrival of the Congolese refugees is placing a financial and operational strain on UNHCR and WFP resources, which are already stretched by funding constraints and challenges associated with COVID-19.

According to the most recent market monitor produced by WFP and partners in mid-June, market functionality – measured in terms of cross-border trade volumes and number of vendors—in districts hosting refugee settlements has begun to stabilize for the first time since the lockdown was initiated. However, interviewed traders report a decline in customers, suggesting a decline in demand that may be driven by below-normal income, the start of the green harvest in June, or the timing of the food assistance distribution cycle. The retail price of maize grain, maize flour, and beans slightly declined or remained stable across settlements during the period of June 1-14 compared to the period of May 16-31. However, price trends varied widely across commodities and settlements in comparison to the pre-COVID period in March. For instance, maize grain prices ranged up to 33 percent above prices recorded in March, while maize flour and bean prices ranged from 40 percent below to 77 percent above prices recorded in March. The staggered start of the first season harvest within refugee settlements and among host communities may be contributing to varying market supply levels and staple food price trends compared to March.

In June, Stressed! (IPC Phase 2!) outcomes are most likely. Two-month distributions of a monthly 70 percent ration, combined with the availability of food stocks from the start of the first-season harvest, are most likely preventing worse food security outcomes this month. Given few sources of income available, most refugees face difficulty meeting their essential non-food needs. Some households who have limited to no own-produced food may be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3), as varying proportions of the refugee population across the settlements do not have access to arable land.

Assumptions

In addition to the national-level assumptions, the most likely food security outcomes in refugee settlements are based on the following assumptions:

- Based on the current COVID-19 case incidence level and the rising number of “alert” cases – defined as individuals who are exposed to COVID-19 and quarantined – in refugee settlements, current restrictions are expected to remain in place in the near term (1-3 months). Refugees’ income from typical livelihood activities is expected to remain below normal.

- Without additional funding for food assistance, available information from WFP indicates that the food assistance will cover 70 percent of refugees’ monthly minimum kilocalorie needs from July to September and 60 percent from October to January. To limit the spread of COVID-19, WFP will continue to distribute rations in two-month distribution cycles. WFP is also likely to increasingly shift from in-kind to cash-based food assistance in settlements in southwestern Uganda.

- FEWS NET’s integrated price projections in Mubende market – a proxy market for the refugee settlements in southwestern Uganda – indicate that the retail maize grain price in Mubende is likely to decline 10-30 percent below the five-year average. The decline is expected to be driven by a seasonal increase in supply from the first-season harvest, low export volumes, and below-normal local demand due to reduced income earned by both host communities and refugees.
• According to WFP’s COVID-19 response plan, acute malnutrition treatment programs and the distribution of two-month rations of Super Cereal Plus via the Maternal Child Health and Nutrition Programme are expected to continue.

• The first season harvest in June/July and second season harvest in November/December are expected to be slightly below average due to disruptions to livelihoods assistance, including access to quality seeds, from NGOs during the pandemic.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

Since refugees’ dependence on food assistance is very high and COVID-19 movement restrictions are most likely to continue to limit their access to income sources in the near term, most refugee households are expected to have food consumption gaps indicative of Crisis! (IPC Phase 3!) from July to October. Based on the average plot size, households with access to arable land are expected to deplete their food stocks from the first season harvest in July and will harvest 1-2 months of food stocks from the second season harvest in November/December. The proportion of households who reported access to arable land varies across settlements but is 43 percent on average, according to the 2017 FSNA. Although staple food prices are expected to decline as the first season harvest enters the market, households will most likely struggle to earn enough income to purchase the rest of their minimum daily kilocalorie needs and are likely to increase their reliance on negative coping strategies or face food consumption gaps. However, it is worth noting that the two-month distribution cycle will create a dynamic situation in which households will most likely alternate between meeting their minimum food needs in the month of distribution and experiencing food gaps in the month between distributions.

Given the likelihood of a reduced, 60 percent ration from October to January, refugee households will most likely continue to have food consumption gaps throughout the scenario period. However, under the assumption that current movement restrictions will be gradually eased in the medium term, it is most likely that refugees will gain increasing freedom of movement to access income sources from October to January. In addition, the second season harvests will become available in November. As a result, refugee households’ income and coping capacity will marginally improve, supporting Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes from November to January.

Although movement restrictions are most severe in Adjumani, Arua, and Moyo districts, refugees in the Adjumani, Imvepi, and Palorinya settlements have relatively better proximity and access to income-earning opportunities in the large trading centers in these areas compared to more remote, rural settlements. Households in these settlements are expected to be able to access some income to purchase food, preventing large food gaps. Across all settlements, sustained food consumption gaps over a period of several months will most likely lead to an increase in acute malnutrition prevalence. However, the expansion of acute malnutrition treatment programs and the distribution of Super Cereal Plus are anticipated to mitigate atypically high deterioration in the prevalence of acute malnutrition. Based on available FSNA data, the prevalence of acute malnutrition in settlements typically ranges from ‘Acceptable’ (GAM WHZ <5 percent) to ‘Alert’ (GAM WHZ 5-9.9 percent).

SEASONAL CALENDAR FOR A TYPICAL YEAR

Source: FEWS NET
MOST LIKELY FOOD SECURITY OUTCOMES AND AREAS RECEIVING SIGNIFICANT LEVELS OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE*

Each of these maps adheres to IPC v3.0 humanitarian assistance mapping protocols and flags where significant levels of humanitarian assistance are being/are expected to be provided. ☐ indicates that at least 25 percent of households receive on average 25–50 percent of caloric needs from humanitarian food assistance (HFA). ☐ indicates that at least 25 percent of households receive on average over 50 percent of caloric needs through HFA. This mapping protocol differs from the (!) protocol used in the maps at the top of the report. The use of (!) indicates areas that would likely be at least one phase worse in the absence of current or programmed humanitarian assistance.

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.