Some COVID-19 restrictions extended indefinitely further threatening informal sector incomes

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.
**Key Messages:**
Stressed! (IPC Phase 2!) outcomes prevail across much of the country as humanitarian assistance distribution is likely preventing worse outcomes. In areas not receiving significant assistance, Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes persist. As the harvest becomes available in surplus-producing areas, access and consumption of own-produced foods are likely to improve, with Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes most likely emerging in June. However, it is anticipated these outcomes will be short-lived due to below-normal harvests. Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are expected across much of the country from June to September in deficit-producing areas and are expected to emerge in August in surplus-producing areas.

In mid-May, the government indefinitely extended some restrictions to curb the spread of COVID-19 while reviewing the measures every two weeks. Under the restrictions, national borders remain closed except for essential formal imports and returning citizens. Privately owned transport services, inter-city, and rural-urban public transport remain banned. While formal businesses are allowed to reopen, restrictions on the informal sector continue. Many urban households relying on the informal sector have seen a significant decrease or complete loss of this income source. Additionally, these measures are impacting rural households by constraining livelihood activities, travel, and access to markets.

The 2019/20 harvest is complete in some areas, though still on-going in others. Production in most areas for most crops is significantly below normal. The demand for both maize grain and maize meal remains higher than typical on the markets as most households have had or are anticipating a limited harvest. Early maize grain and traditional (small) grains supplies on the markets are much lower than usual and prices remain unseasonally high. Shortages of subsidized maize meal continue across the country, with readily available stocks on the black market highly priced and not affordable for poor households.

ZIMSTAT reported annual inflation for April at 766 percent up from 676 percent in March and 540 percent in February. Following the mid-May announcement of the imminent release of new ZWL 10 and ZWL 20 bond notes, the local currency devalued by over 30 percent on parallel markets in one week. Parallel market exchange rates increased from around 1:50 for the US Dollar against the local currency to nearly 1:70 compared to the official 1:25, over the same period, further driving up prices of most goods and services.

Water availability and access challenges are increasing especially in low rainfall areas following a below-average rainfall season and an early cessation of rains in February compared to the typical March/April. This is increasing household difficulties to meet domestic, livestock, and other livelihood water needs. The situation is expected to worsen during the dry season through October/November. Pasture and livestock conditions are also expected to deteriorate earlier and faster than usual in such areas, with atypically high livestock deaths expected, especially for cattle.

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https://fews.net/southern-africa/zimbabwe/key-message-update/may-2020

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