Overview

Through March 2021, at least 2.9 million people face high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) and therefore require urgent action. Of these people, 614,000 are in Emergency (IPC Phase 4). The entire country has been classified in IPC Phase 3, with the departments with the greatest severity being Cortés (41%), Yoro and Valle (35%), and with the greatest magnitude: Cortés (732,000 people in IPC Phase 3 or above), Francisco Morazán (469,000 people), and Yoro (271,000 people).

In the first projection period of April to June 2021, the population in IPC Phase 3 or above will likely increase to about 3.1 million, and to 3.3 million in the second projection period of July to September 2021. The severity of acute food insecurity has reached unprecedented levels and the IPC analysis projects that the situation will worsen in the coming months. The main causes of this worrying situation are the heavy losses caused by category 4 hurricanes Eta and Iota in November 2020, which destroyed homes and livelihoods, as well as income losses due to mobility and transport restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

In both projection periods, the situation of acute food insecurity will likely be exacerbated by a persistent lack of employment, depletion of food reserves, rising food prices, and the possibility of exacerbation of COVID-19 measures due to the seasonal lean season expected by the end of the second projection period. These conditions could lead to the persistence of Crisis and Emergency coping strategies in affected households.

Key Drivers

Hurricanes Eta and Iota

The hurricanes had an impact on the livelihoods of the population, causing heavy losses in the productive sector (road infrastructure, social equipment, water and sanitation, communications network, and land and air transport). It is estimated that more than 27 million people and 27,000 houses were directly affected by these events (COPECO), and with losses in agriculture, livestock, and fisheries. For example, it has been estimated that up to 51,000 bushels of basic grains (DITGA-SAG) have been lost in agriculture.

The conditions generated by the hurricanes and COVID-19 caused:

- Depletion of reserves and crop failure: The loss of staple grains, mainly beans and maize in subsistence farming households has reduced food reserves and some households had to sell all of their food through purchase.
- Price increases: Food prices are rising due to losses and depletion of stocks in the market, mainly affecting households that obtain their food through purchase.
- Loss of income: Around 1/2 the households have had reduced income sources, either because they are related to informal trade, because of closures of sources of employment, or because of a reduction in the supply of agricultural day labour.

Displacement of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs)

Nearly 3.1 million people are expected to face high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) between April and June 2021.

Nearly 3.3 million people are expected to face high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) between November 2020 and March 2021.