AFGHANISTAN: Integrated Food Security Phase Classification Snapshot | August 2020 - March 2021

Overview

During the period of August to October 2020, corresponding to the post-harvest season, it is estimated that a total of 11.15 million people (36% of the analyzed population) were facing high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) and required urgent humanitarian action. This includes around 7.54 million people in Crisis (IPC Phase 4) and 3.6 million people in Emergency (IPC Phase 3 or above). Around 11.34 million people were also in Stressed (IPC Phase 2) and required livelihood support.

During the projection period of November 2020 and March 2021, corresponding to the lean season, around 13.15 million people (42% of the analyzed population) are likely to experience high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above), out of which an estimated 8.85 million people will likely be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) and nearly 4.3 million people will likely be in Emergency (IPC Phase 4). Furthermore, around 10.6 million people are expected to be in Stressed (IPC Phase 2).

Although the two periods of analysis do not exactly coincide, as the April-May 2020 includes the green harvest in lowland areas, a rough comparison between the 2020 lean season and the 2021 lean season could be attempted: The 2020 lean season, analyzed in April 2020, shows an estimated population of 10.9 million people (10,837,000) that was facing high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above). Meanwhile, the analysis conducted in October 2020 over the 2021 lean season (November 2020 and March 2021) shows 13.1 million people (13,155,000) will likely be facing high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above), corresponding to an increase of 2.3 million people (2,298,000) from the 2019 to 2020 lean season.

Key Drivers

COVID-19
The consequences of restrictions imposed due to COVID-19 have resulted in a significant decrease of daily wage opportunities and small trade income. The consequences of restrictions imposed due to COVID-19 have resulted in a significant decrease of daily wage opportunities and small trade income. On the other hand, decreased remittances remain at the same level even during the initial outbreak of COVID-19 with some improvements.

Floods
Floods have resulted in the loss of shelters and productive assets, causing displacement and increasing food insecurity.

Conflict
Ongoing conflict in most provinces has led to displacement, causing loss of livelihoods, or affected people’s livelihoods. As a result, farmers don’t have access to their agricultural lands for cultivation and harvesting at the right time, with a similar effect on livestock and other sectors. Overall, access to contended areas remained limited during the current period and is expected to remain the same during the projection period.

High Food Prices
High food prices of cereals and other staples have negatively impacted the purchasing power of people and further exacerbated food access constraints, especially for the households already living below the poverty line.

Focus on Internally Displaced People (IDPs)
Afghanistan faces one of the world’s most acute internal displacement crises as it suffers from protracted conflict, ongoing insecurity, the global COVID-19 pandemic, and natural hazards such as droughts, floods and earthquakes. Displacement has become a familiar survival strategy for many Afghans. Millions of individuals, families and communities migrate within and outside the country.

On average, half a million people leave their homes every year, because of the conflict. Most of these IDPs (75%) are found in need of urgent humanitarian assistance as per the historical trend data from the Food Security and Agriculture Cluster (FSAC) Afghanistan. Although there are various assessments and definitions of IDPs in Afghanistan, IDPs are mainly categorized under new, prolonged or protracted IDPs. According to the internal displacement monitoring centre (IDMC), there were 2,993,000 IDPs in Afghanistan in December 2019 and this number is expected to further increase by the end of 2020. According to OCHA, IDP tracking data, a total of 202,856 IDPs fled their homes from January to mid-September 2020, which shows an increment of 7% compared to January-December 2019, and by end of the year 2020, the IDP number is likely to further increase.

Projected Acute Food Insecurity Situation | November 2020 - March 2021

Over 13.1 million people are expected to face high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above) between November 2020 and March 2021.

Focus on Internally Displaced People (IDPs)

COVID-19 Impact

Despite the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions, labour opportunities and wage income, high food prices in local markets and poor inflow of remittances have not improved, as was projected to happen in the April 2020 analysis. This is expected that a second wave of COVID-19 infections will further exacerbate the situation. Even if restrictions will not be put in place in Afghanistan, there will still be impacts from global restrictions and economic downturn. Reduced support for the most vulnerable populations by government and international organizations is expected, due to multiple factors linked to COVID-19 restrictions imposed on organizations and the government, and decreased funding after the drought emergency resumed.

Following the conclusion of an external Quality Review, it is FEWS NET’s opinion that the recommendations of the Quality Review team have not been sufficiently incorporated into the final conclusions of the IPC analysis. FEWS NET therefore maintains a minority view from the conclusions articulated in this report. A summary of FEWS NET’s minority view can be found here: https://fews.net/afghanistan-ipc-minority-report