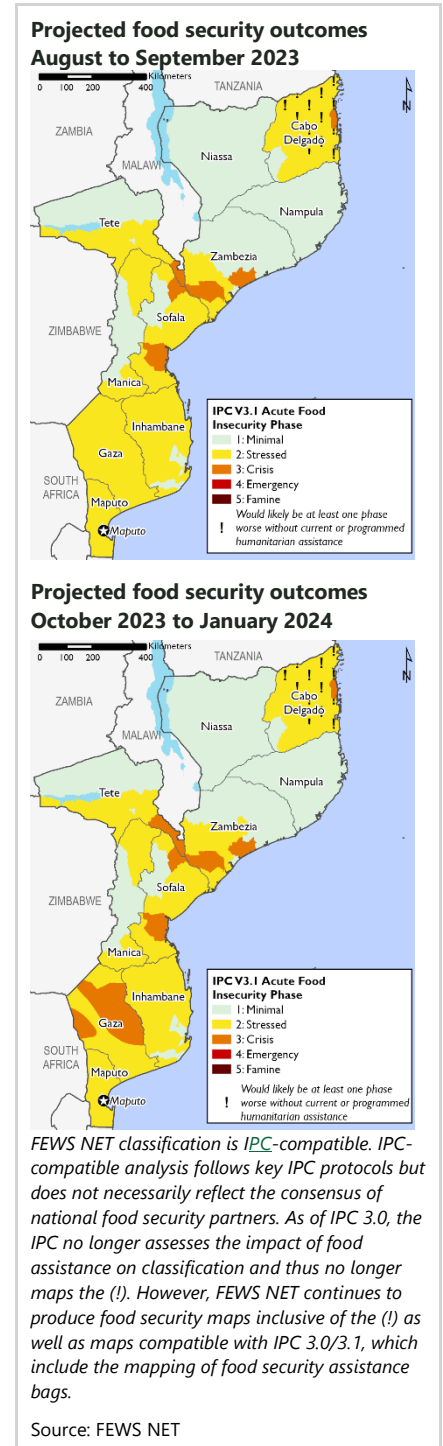




Food assistance needs are likely to increase during the upcoming lean season

Key Messages

- Crisis (IPC Phase 3) and Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes are present in areas of southern and central Mozambique that experienced a poor harvest following prolonged dry spells or storms/cyclones in February and March 2023, as household food stocks deplete, along with limited access to income. However, most households across Mozambique are facing Minimal (IPC Phase 1) acute food insecurity outcomes supported by adequate access to their food and non-food needs. In conflict-affected areas of Cabo Delgado province, the gradual return of IDPs and increased access for governmental and humanitarian organizations to distribute humanitarian food assistance is driving Stressed! (IPC Phase 2!) outcomes.
- In mid-August, FEWS NET carried out a rapid qualitative food security assessment in Mecufi, Metuge and Ancuabe districts in Cabo Delgado province. Findings indicate that most households have maize food reserves that will last for one to three months. The main sources of food are own production along with humanitarian food assistance. Households with access to low-lying areas are also growing cassava, vegetables, and horticultural crops, while a few households are growing second-season maize that is likely to be harvested in late September or early October. Most poor households reported eating one to two meals a day of vegetables, cereals, and tubers and are largely meeting their minimum food needs.
- In July, the Food Security Cluster (FSC) partners assisted 461,290 people nationally, around 42 percent of the targeted beneficiaries, with humanitarian food assistance (HFA) during the July/August distribution cycle. The FSC partners plan to assist the remainder of the targeted beneficiaries in August. Around 80 percent of the HFA was distributed as in-kind food, with the remainder as cash-based transfers (CBT). In Cyclone Freddy affected areas, around 17,760 people in four districts of Zambézia and Sofala provinces received assistance, while nearly 5,410 people received support in recovering or strengthening their basic livelihoods in Namacurra and Maganja da Costa. The distribution of HFA is expected to continue through 2023. In the next distribution cycle, all beneficiaries in districts that undertook the Vulnerability Based Targeting (VBT) exercise are likely to begin receiving assistance.
- Climate forecasts suggest increasing confidence in a strong El Niño by late 2023. El Niño is typically correlated with below-average rainfall in southern and central Mozambique with average rainfall in the north. Based on historical trends during El Niño years, the onset of the main rainy season between October and December will most likely be delayed with mixed performance, especially in the south. Irregular rainfall will most likely compound the impacts of reduced access to agricultural inputs on planted area, which will in turn affect income-earning among poor households who rely on agricultural labor opportunities. Close monitoring of rainfall totals and distribution will be required to assess the severity of adverse impacts on cropping conditions for the 2023/24 harvest. There is particular concern for areas in the south that already experienced significant crop losses due to dry spells in 2023 and cyclones in 2022 and 2023. Government and donors should prepare now for rising food assistance needs in 2024.



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. As of IPC 3.0, the IPC no longer assesses the impact of food assistance on classification and thus no longer maps the (!). However, FEWS NET continues to produce food security maps inclusive of the (!) as well as maps compatible with IPC 3.0/3.1, which include the mapping of food security assistance bags.



FEWS NET is a USAID-funded activity. The content of this report does not necessarily reflect the view of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

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Current Situation

Current food security outcomes. Most poor households across rural Mozambique face Minimal (IPC Phase 1) outcomes as they continue to rely on food stocks from the main 2023 harvest and post-flood and second-season crop production (typically vegetables) and access typical income-earning opportunities. Although maize grain prices are higher than normal, monitored markets are well supplied. However, the high maize prices are impacting poor household purchasing power, with many poor households purchasing less preferred and cheaper foods to supplement their own food stocks from the 2023 main harvest. In areas of southern and central Mozambique that experienced a poor harvest from prolonged dry spells or storms/cyclones in February and March, poor households are facing Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes as food stocks deplete from the below-average harvests and poor households have limited access to income generation opportunities for market purchases. Poor households in the worst affected areas are increasingly engaging in coping strategies indicative of Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes to minimize food consumption gaps. In conflict-affected areas of Cabo Delgado province, the general improvement in security is supporting the gradual return of IDPs and improving governmental and humanitarian organizations access to distribute humanitarian food assistance, driving Stressed! (IPC Phase 2!) outcomes in Muidumbe, Nangade, Palma, Quissanga and the inner part of Macomia. In these areas, ongoing and planned HFA deliveries are expected to reach at least 25 percent of households with rations equivalent to around 78 percent of monthly kilocalorie needs, supporting household food access. However, many IDPs and recent returnees are continuing to struggle to engage in typical income generating activities for market purchases and remain reliant on HFA to meet their food needs until they recover their typical livelihood activities.

Conflict zones in Cabo Delgado. The improvement in security and decline in conflict events is supporting the resumption of social and economic life as IDPs return to districts that have been affected by conflict since 2017, along with the mobilization of resources for reconstruction. Additionally, poor households are likely continuing to travel back to their area of origin to prepare land ahead of the 2023/2024 rainy season and recover their typical livelihood activities. However, sporadic attacks by small cells of insurgents on villages in central, coastal, and northern Cabo Delgado continue to locally disrupt poor household access to income and food.

In mid-August, FEWS NET carried out a qualitative rapid food security assessment in Mecufi, Metuge and Ancuabe districts in Cabo Delgado province. Most households had maize reserves from the 2023 harvest that could last one to three months (Figure 1). Households reported that they are relying primarily on their own production for food, with IDPs largely reliant on humanitarian food assistance, most notably in the districts of Metuge and Ancuabe. Households with access to low-lying areas near rivers are continuing to cultivate cassava, vegetables and horticultural crops, while a few households are growing second season maize that is expected to be harvested in late September/early October (Figure 1). Poor households are primarily consuming vegetables, cereals, and tubers, with most poor households consuming one to two meals a day. However, some poor households in Metuge reported that the reduction in food assistance is negatively impacting their food access as government food assistance has been their main source of food. In local markets, rice and maize flour prices are stable, with a kilogram of either commodity retailing for 60 MZN (0.95 USD), while vegetable and horticultural crop prices are relatively lower than normal amid greater diversity of fresh vegetables observed in local markets. However, poor households are relying primarily on cassava meal or maize meal from their own production for food. If poor households are purchasing food, they typically purchase around 500 grams of rice or maize meal for daily household consumption. Many poor households are engaging in income-generating activities, particularly small businesses such as the sale of food products, firewood and charcoal, production and sale of craft products such as mats, sieves, and baskets (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Second season Maize production in the lower zone in Metuge (left); Drying/preserving main seasons harvested crops (maize) in Ancuabe district (center), and selling various products in the community, Metuge district (right)



Source: FEWS NET

Official preliminary production estimates of the 2023 harvest. Preliminary data from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MADER), estimates that around 2.94 million metric tons (MT) of cereals (maize grain, sorghum, millet, rice, wheat) was harvested in 2023, a 4.1 percent increase compared to the 2022 harvest, despite the impact of prolonged dry spells, and damage from flooding and tropical storms/cyclones during the 2022/23 growing season. More specifically, around 2.48 million MT of maize was estimated to be harvested, a 3.9 percent increase compared to 2022, while sorghum, millet, and rice production increased by 1.7 to 6.8 percent compared to 2022. Similarly, around 7.4 million MT of tubers (cassava, sweet potato, and potatoes) were harvested in 2023, a 5.7 percent compared to last year, along with 270,970 MT of oilseeds and 588,086 MT of legumes. The rise in crop production is being attributed to continued investments in agricultural production, including the government's [SUSTENTA](#) program. MADER also estimates that 3.8 million MT of vegetables (tomatoes, onions, and other vegetables) were grown in 2023, a 3.13 percent compared to last year. In general, the 2023 harvest is supporting food availability and household food access across much of rural Mozambique.

Humanitarian food assistance. In July, the Food Security Cluster (FSC) partners assisted 461,290 people nationally with HFA during the July/August distribution cycle, around 42 percent of the targeted beneficiaries. Around 389,400 people in Cabo Delgado received assistance. The FSC partners plan to assist the remainder of the targeted beneficiaries in August. Currently, four of the nine districts where the WFP-led Vulnerability Based Targeting (VBT) exercise was conducted are distributing assistance based on VBT lists. Around 80 percent of humanitarian food assistance rations were distributed as in-kind food assistance, with the remainder as cash-based transfers (CBT). Households are receiving rations equivalent to around 39 percent of their monthly kilocalorie needs. In areas affected by tropical cyclone Freddy, around 17,760 people received HFA in July across three districts of Zambézia province and one district of Sofala province. Relatedly, nearly 5,410 people received support in recovering or strengthening their basic livelihoods in the districts of Namacurra and Maganja da Costa in Zambézia province.

Maize grain prices. In July, maize grain prices atypically increased during the post-harvest period. Maize grain prices increased by 15-42 percent in Maputo, Xai-Xai, Angónia, and Mocuba, remained stable in Chókwe and Maxixe, and decreased by 7 percent in Lichinga and 17 percent in Montepuez. The rise in maize prices is likely being driven by the slow entry and availability of maize grain in local markets, particularly in markets where the harvest was delayed or there were crop losses from climatic shocks in early 2023. Most monitored markets with available price data indicate that maize grain prices in July 2023 were 19 to 69 percent higher than last year, except in Chókwe and Maxixe markets where maize grain prices remained stable. Similarly, maize grain prices are 12 to 86 percent higher than the five-year average. The abnormally high maize prices are likely affecting the

purchasing power of poor households who are likely coping by purchasing less preferred and cheaper foods such as cassava, sweet potatoes, and lower-grade rice.

Rice and maize meal prices. Rice prices remained relatively stable in all monitored markets from June to July 2023, retailing at 50 to 70 MZN per kilogram (~.80 to 1.11 USD/kg). In most markets, rice prices are similar to last year, except in Maxixe and Montepuez where rice prices were 8 and 9 percent higher, respectively. Compared to the five-year average, rice prices in July 2023 were 6 to 32 percent higher than the five-year average in all monitored markets except in Chókwe where prices remain stable. Similarly, maize meal prices remained relatively stable in all monitored markets from June to July 2023 retailing at 45 to around 73 MZN per kilogram (~70-1.15 USD/kg). However, in Chókwe market, maize meal prices increased 50 percent following a 27 percent decrease last month, while in Mocuba, maize meal prices increased by 19 percent. Changes in rice and maize meal prices are often related to local supply and demand dynamics. Maize meal prices in July 2023 were stable in most monitored markets as compared to last year, but prices were 8 percent lower than last year in Chókwe and 12 to 14 percent higher than last year in Lichinga and Mocuba, respectively. Compared to the five-year average, maize meal prices in July 2023 were 7 to 23 percent higher in all markets except in Montepuez where maize meal prices were similar.

Inflation. In July, the National Institute of Statistics (INE) reported that annual national inflation was 5.67 percent, the lowest inflation rate recorded in the last 18 months. The moderation in national inflation was driven by softer rises in the prices of food and non-alcoholic beverages, transportation, and housing and utilities. Additionally, there were notable decreases in the prices of tomatoes, onions, coconuts, kale, and lettuce as the horticultural produce from the second season reaches the market. However, with the price of maize, education, and miscellaneous goods and services 13 to 17 percent higher than last year, the cost of key staples and non-food needs remains high for most poor and very poor families despite the overall decline in national inflation rates. The general high cost of living is likely impacting poor households in areas affected by weather shocks and conflict where the 2023 harvest was below-average and poor households have limited access income-earning opportunities.

Updated Assumptions

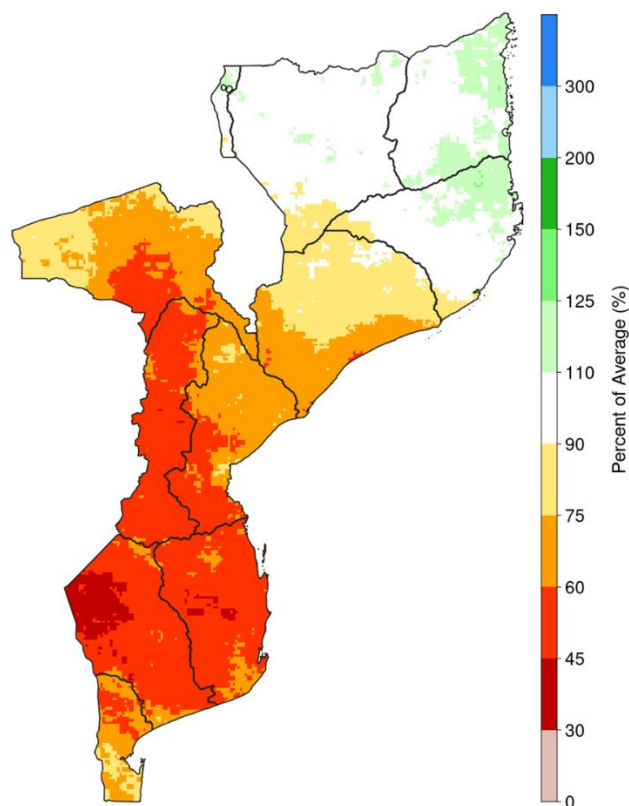
The assumptions used to develop FEWS NET’s most likely scenario for the Mozambique [Food Security Outlook for June 2023 to January 2024](#) remain unchanged, except for the following:

- Climate forecasts suggest increasing confidence in a strong El Niño by late 2023. El Niño is typically correlated with below-average rainfall in southern and central Mozambique with average rainfall in the north (Figure 2).
- Normal to below normal precipitation and resultant near-surface (0-20cm) soil moisture in some central and southern parts of Mozambique is expected to negatively impact the first half of the 2023/24 agricultural season from October to December 2023.
- Humanitarian food assistance is expected to continue in the July/August, September/October and November/December cycles, with the gradual introduction of assistance on the basis of Vulnerability Based Targeting (VBT) process, which from September/October cycle is expected to be implemented in all districts, where VBT exercise was carried out.

Projected Outlook through January 2024

In August and September 2023, Minimal (IPC Phase 1) outcomes are expected in most rural areas of Mozambique as poor households continue accessing food from their own production along with typical access to income-earning opportunities.

Figure 2 Median rainfall in the December to February period of five strong El Niño events (1982/83, 1991/92, 1997/98, 2009/10, and 2015/16)



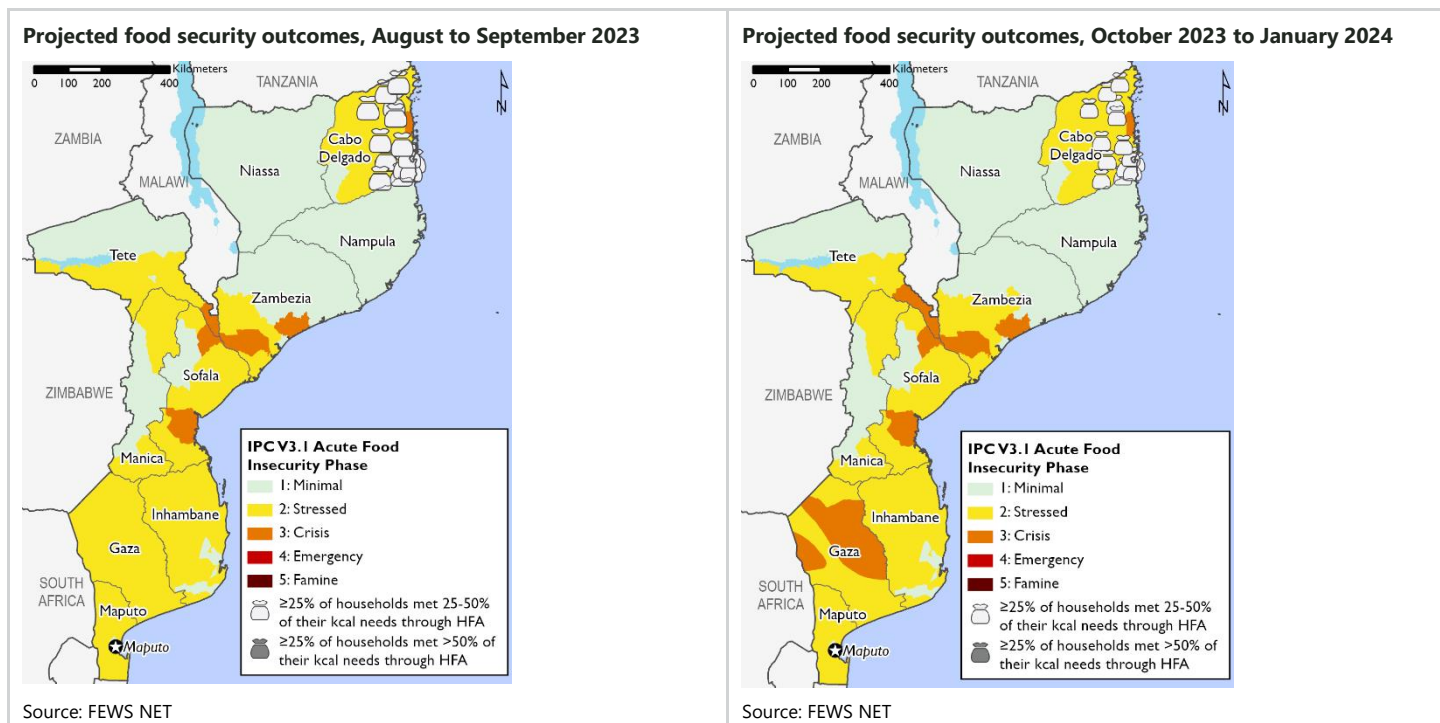
Source: Climate Hazards Center UC Santa Barbara and FEWS NET

However, Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes are likely in areas affected by weather shocks in 2023, where the main harvest was below-average. In these areas, households with access to low-lying areas with residual moisture or access to irrigation systems will be reliant on the second season and post-flood production to minimize food consumption gaps but unable to cover costs of non-food items. Poor and very poor households unable to practice any post-flood or second-season production will likely intensify coping strategies indicative of Stressed (IPC Phase 2) to minimize food consumption gaps and increase their consumption of wild foods. In the worst flood and cyclone-affected areas of Zambézia, Sofala, and Tete, very poor and poor households unable to engage in a second season and produce and sell livestock or charcoal will likely engage in consumption-based coping strategies indicative of Crisis (IPC Phase 3) such as skipping meals, reducing meal sizes, and increased consumption of wild foods to minimize food consumption gaps. In Cabo Delgado's conflict-affected areas, widespread Stressed! (IPC Phase 2!) outcomes are expected as ongoing HFA and increased access support the return of IDPs to their areas of origin as they seek to return home and reengage in their typical sources of food and income ahead of the 2023/24 agricultural season. However, the number of IDPs is likely to remain high through 2023. However, Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are expected in areas where conflict is ongoing and continues to disrupt poor household access to food and income.

From October 2023 to January 2024, Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes will likely emerge in parts of the south as food stocks deplete and a likely erratic start of the rainy season, due to El Niño, will affect the availability of agricultural labor activities, an important source of income for poor households. Additionally, higher-than-average food prices and lower-than-average income will result in increasingly low purchasing power and market access for poor households. In the central regions, the start of the rainy season in November is likely to also be erratic due to El Niño, impacting land preparation and planting. As the lean season continues, poor households will likely begin engaging in more severe coping strategies to minimize food consumption gaps such as withdrawing children from school, unless meals are provided at school, or sending household members to eat elsewhere. The poorest households, without livestock to sell or the ability to produce and sell charcoal, will likely intensify their engagement in coping strategies indicative of Crisis (IPC Phase 3). However, agricultural labor wages in weather-shocked areas are likely to be lower than typical due to middle and better-off households having lower-than-normal liquidity following below-normal crop sales from the 2023 harvest. In parts of Zambézia and Tete province, areas most affected by tropical storm Freddy are expected to be Stressed (IPC Phase 2) or in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) as households deplete their food stocks from the second season and continue to recover their livelihoods. However, limited access to seeds and agricultural inputs is likely to restrain agricultural labor opportunities and access to income during the lean season. In Cabo Delgado, the planned delivery of humanitarian assistance by partners in the food security cluster is expected to drive widespread Stressed! (IPC Phase 2!) outcomes while conflict-affected areas will likely remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3).

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.



Recommended Citation: FEWS NET. Mozambique Food Security Outlook Update, August 2023: Food assistance needs are likely to increase during the upcoming lean season.

About this update

This report provides an analysis of current acute food insecurity conditions in the specified geography, including any changes to FEWS NET's latest projection of acute food insecurity outcomes. [Learn more here.](#)