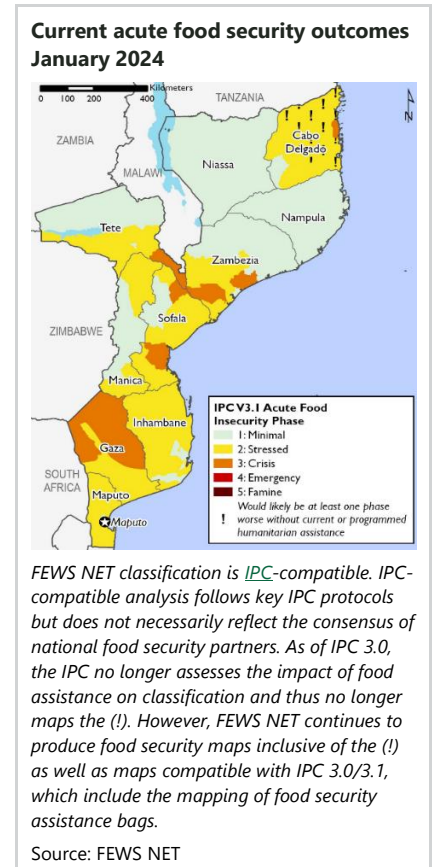


## Below-average harvest expected in central semi-arid zones

### Key Messages

- Crisis (IPC Phase 3) and Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes are present in the southern and central areas most impacted by Tropical Cyclone Freddy in 2023. Very poor households have already exhausted their food reserves earlier than anticipated, leading to limited purchasing power amid the elevated staple food prices. In Cabo Delgado Province, Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes persist in the areas most affected by conflict, while areas receiving humanitarian assistance are likely facing Stressed! (IPC Phase 2!). However, attacks in January 2024 by non-state armed groups (NSAG) in the districts of Mocímboa da Praia and Macomia have displaced households and revived high tensions over competition for limited resources in those districts and surrounding areas. As the lean season advances, it is anticipated that Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are likely to emerge in areas where the onset of the 2023/24 agricultural season was poor due to below-average rainfall and above-average temperatures.
- In general, the rains started in November and December with a [delay of more than 20 days](#) in most parts of the country. In some areas, such as coastal areas of Zambézia province and northern Manica and Sofala provinces, delays exceeded 30 days. These delays are likely to shrink the crop-growing season, and rainfall is expected to end before crops are ready for harvest, as is typical during an El Niño. Substantial rainfall in mid- and late December prompted the start of planting activities in most areas throughout the country, particularly in the northern provinces. In January, rainfall has largely been average to above-average in northern Mozambique, but below-average in southern provinces. In Cabo Delgado, localized flooding in the districts of Mueda and Macomia destroyed infrastructure, including shelters for internally displaced people in resettlement centers.
- In December 2023, maize grain prices remained stable, except for an 8 percent increase in the Mocuba market in Zambézia Province, reflecting the gradual reduction in supply and increased demand by most poor households. Despite the stability, prices are 30 to 55 percent higher than last year and 10 to 70 percent higher than the five-year average, likely due to the cumulative impacts of previous climatic shocks and high fuel and transportation costs. Rice and maize meal prices remained relatively stable in most monitored markets, both around 10 percent higher than last year's prices and 15 to 25 percent above the five-year average. Mozambique's annual inflation rate for 2023 was around 5 percent, well within the government's target figure of less than 10 percent, according to the [National Statistics Institute \(INE\)](#). Monthly inflation was 1.3 percent, mostly driven by increases in food and non-alcoholic beverages.
- In early January, FEWS NET conducted a rapid qualitative assessment of food security in the semi-arid zones of southern and central Mozambique. Preliminary findings indicate a more favorable crop situation in the semi-arid areas of the south than expected, while the central areas are experiencing the typical impacts of El Niño. In the south, most early planted crops have managed to survive and, together with later-planted crops, are currently in good condition and in the vegetative and flowering growth phases. Conversely, in the central zone, early planted crops were lost and were followed by multiple unsuccessful planting attempts. In this zone, the existing crops in the field are in germination phase, with little chance to complete the vegetative cycle. As a result, most households are focusing on preparations for second-season production, increasing the demand for vegetables and short-cycle maize seeds.



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.*

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