World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

FOOD SECURITY HIGHLIGHTS

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Contents

Looming Food Insecurity in West-Africa

Highlights

West Africa and Sahel are facing an unprecedented food insecurity driven by compounded multiple factors, including severe rainfall deficits, insecurity, soaring food prices and slow economic recovery.

1. It is projected that the upcoming 2022 lean season, between June-August, 38 million people will become food insecure, an **increase of 22%** in comparison to last year, with 2.6 million people in phase 4 and approximatively 14,000 in phase 5 (Catastrophe, only in north-eastern Nigeria).

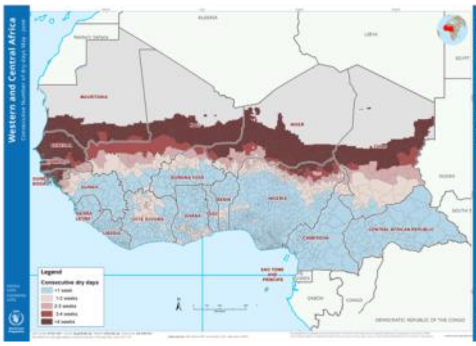
2. Total rainfall amounts received across the region are lower than in 2011, and several countries were affected by a late start of the season and long dry spells in September and October, which occurred at a critical stage of crop development, green up and maturity period of major cereals, and are comparable **to rainfall deficits recorded in the severe droughts of 1983 and 2011**. Consequently, huge cereals production deficits have been recorded in many countries. For instance, in Chad, in the Sahel West farmers lost 47% of their cereals production. In Niger, Burkina Faso, Gambia, Côte d'Ivoire, respectively 38%, 10%, 18% in Gambia, 9% of the total cereal production was lost.

3. Insecurity affects populations' ability to access and cultivate their lands. Analyses of high-resolution satellite imagery conducted by WFP clearly highlight how agricultural surface areas have reduced in recent years, particularly in crisis hotspot areas such as the Central Sahel – a dynamic that is particularly concerning as some of the affected regions are areas of high production.

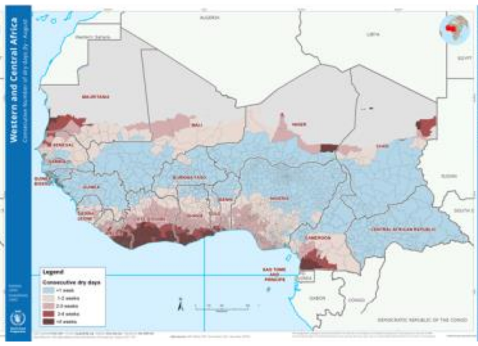
4. The price of locally produced food remains abnormally high, driven by the production deficit across the region. At the same time, the prices of imported food commodities such as rice, wheat, sugar, oil and maize are at a record high, driven by increases on international markets, transport costs and trade barriers. In Senegal and Burkina Faso maize price has increased respectively by 60% and 50% compared to the five-year average. In Niger, Sorghum price increased by 40%. In Guinea, imported rice price gone up by 50%.

1. Poor performance of 2021 rainy season

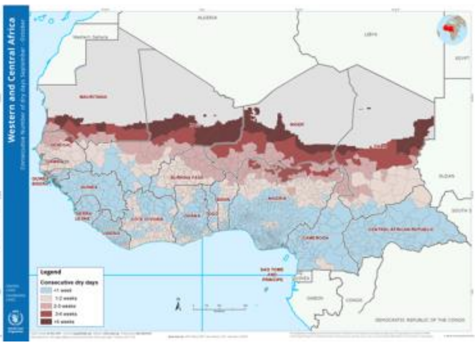
May - June



July - August



September - October



The 2021 rainy season performance was poor and characterised by below average rainfall. Expectational prolonged dry spells hit the entire region. In September and October, greenup and maturity period for the major cereals cultivated in the region, unfavourable rainfall conditions were recorded, with a poor distribution of rainfall and below-average rains in most of the region – above all the Sahelian belt. The total amounts of rainfall recorded in 2021 is slightly below levels recorded in 2011. In Niger and Mauritania, September and October 2021 have been exceptionally dry, similar to the situation observed during the same period in 2011 and 1983.

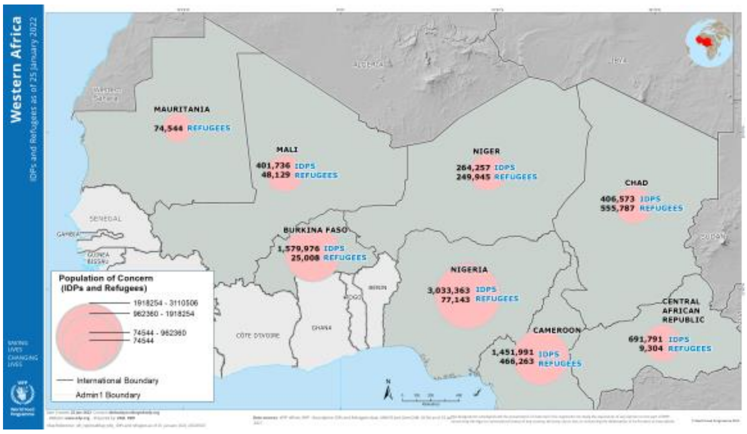
Picture: Water stress on cowpea in Gourjeima Village, Mauritania

During September rainfall decreased resulting in a poor distribution of rainfall, which has led to below average condition in the region. These developments are expected to result in a negative impact on crops and pasture development – particularly in areas where early season dryness has persisted for a very long time, such as in northern Senegal, southern Mauritania, central and northern Mali, northern Nigeria, and northern Niger and Lac Chad. In central Mali and southwestern Niger, rainfall deficits in July were compounded by a severe deficit in September, which is likely to impact crops at critical flowering and maturation stages and exacerbate poor conditions resulting from ongoing conflict. There is also concern in localized parts of southern Chad impacted by flooding.

2. DISPLACEMENT

Conflict continues to underpin vulnerability and food insecurity in the region, as around 9.3 million people have had to flee their homes or countries. Almost 7.8 million of these are IDPs, and 1.5 million are refugees. Nigeria and Burkina Faso have the highest number of IDPs, mostly due to the chronic conflict in both countries (see map below). In 2021, in Sahelian countries, there has been an increase of over 79 percent in the number of displaced persons and over 100 percent among the number of refugees in just one year.

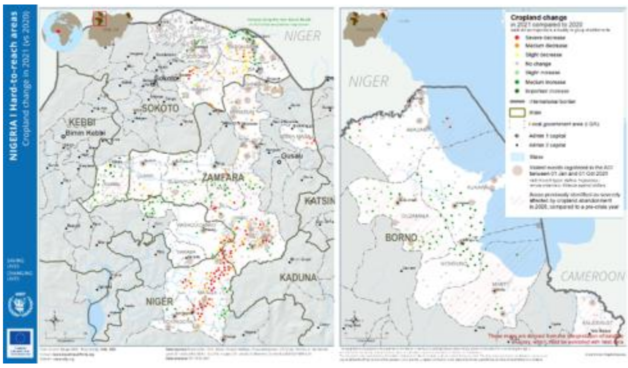
Pastoralists movements and migration patterns often get disrupted by conflict and insecurity, especially in the Liptako Gourma and Lake Chad regions, which makes pastoralists households more vulnerable to food insecurity. Further demonstrating the positive correlation between conflict and food insecurity, which shows a clear relationship between the concentration of civilian fatalities and the areas under "food" crisis phases.



3. Insecurity and cropland abandonment

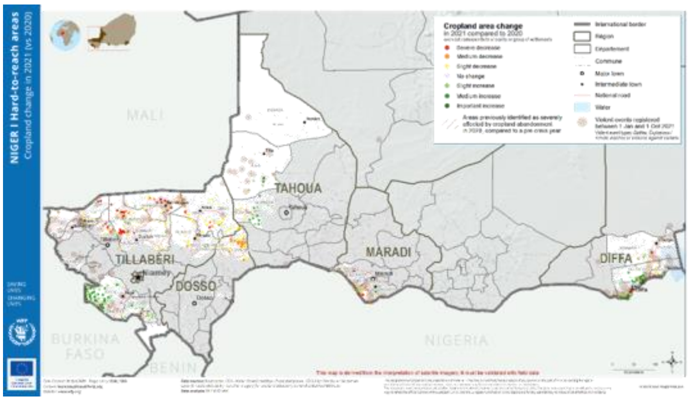
> "In total, for the four countries, over 800,000 square kilometers were analyzed, home to roughly 23 million people (source: HRSL)."

The context of the security crisis in the Sahel is hampering the monitoring of the agricultural season and national food security analyses. Increasingly, some areas are hard to access due to high levels of insecurity and information gaps are ever-growing. The deteriorating security situation particularly affects the three-border area between Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, as well as the Lake Chad region but also parts of northwest Nigeria.

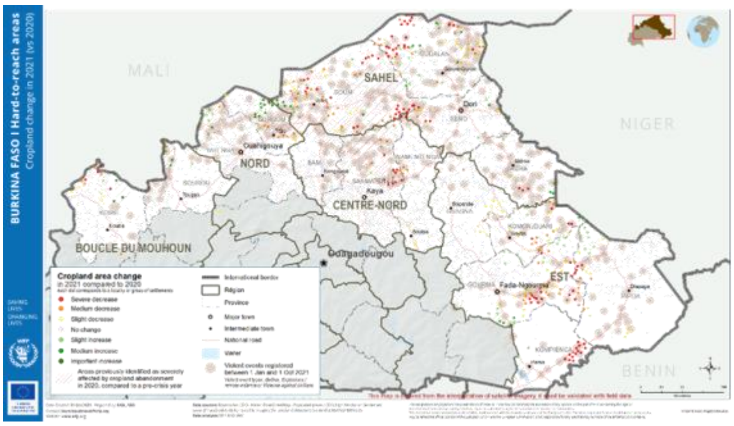


WFP has piloted the use of high-resolution satellite imagery since the end of 2018 in the Sahel zone, to detect cropland changes in conflict-affected areas. The WFP Regional Bureau for Western Africa's (RBD) geospatial workstream aims to provide evidence of existing hazards and vulnerabilities, and in doing so, address critical information gaps and help inform disaster risk assessment, early warning systems and response planning in the region. The maps below summarize information derived from satellite-based analysis, showing cropland changes in hard-to-access areas of Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Nigeria, for the 2021 agricultural season (compared to the previous year), overlaid with ACLED data on violent events. The maps highlights areas where abnormal agricultural activities occurred in the last year (between 2020 and 2021), and also show areas that were already affected by significant cropland loss in 2020 (striped symbols).

The most affected areas in the 2020 and 2021 agricultural seasons were northern and western Burkina Faso, southeast of Mopti in central Mali, northern Tillabéri in Niger as well as parts in northwest Nigeria. The estimated affected people are around 600,000 people. It must be noted that northeast Nigeria (Borno state), an area which has endured a longstanding conflict and where the security context deteriorated very abruptly in the past few years presents significant signs of agricultural recovery in localized areas where cropland had been abandoned before. The analysis shows that cropland change patterns highly depend on the country and its specific context (security, livelihoods, geography, etc.).

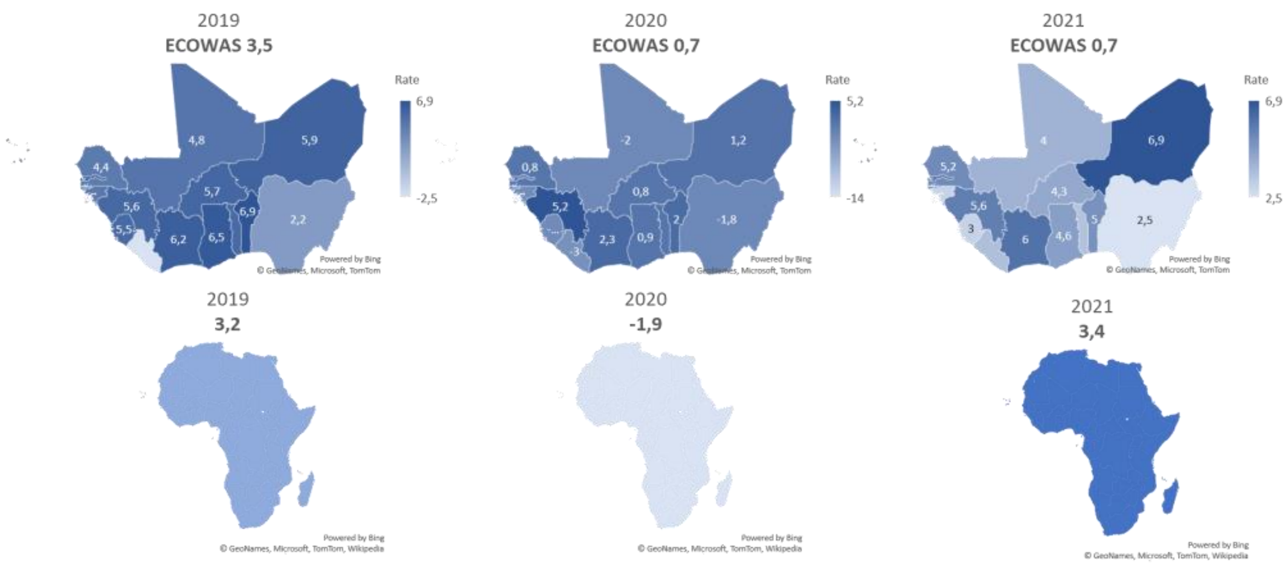


The analysis will also be conducted for hard-to-reach areas in Cameroon, Chad and Central African Republic, ahead of the 2022 March Cadre Harmonisé session. Indicators are calculated at administrative level 2 or 3, from which recommendations are proposed under the form of contributing factors (light, medium, strong), for use in the national food security analyses. Such indicators include ratios of affected localities and affected populations per administrative division, for each cropland change category.



4. COVID-19 Impact

Economic growth in West Africa, 2019-2021



A FRAGILE RECOVERY OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

According to the IMF's April 2021 report on Sub-Saharan Africa, West Africa's real GDP growth fell to 0.7% in 2020, from 3.5% in 2019, due to the worst global recession in over a century due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The shock was felt most deeply in six of the 15 countries in the sub-region, in Cabo Verde, Liberia, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone, Mali and Nigeria .

INCREASE IN DEBT

The increase in debt levels and the debt-service burden (more than 20% of tax revenue in many countries such as Ghana, 12.3%; Guinea-Bissau, 10.2%; Mali, 14.5%; and Togo, 17.3% according to World Bank data for 2019) constricted the fiscal space available for most countries. Recent debt accumulation is mainly due to exchange rate depreciation, an increase in interest expenses and high primary deficits. It is important to point out that all West African countries are now classed as moderate- or high-debt countries (Table below), even though 13 of the 15 ECOWAS countries (except for Nigeria and Cabo Verde) have already benefitted from the HIPC initiative and multilateral debt relief initiative of the IMF and the World Bank.

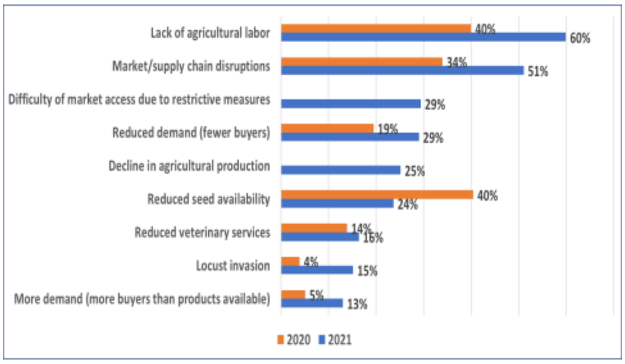
DEBT/GDP RATIOS (IN 2021)

MODERATE	DEBT/GDP RATIO (%)	HIGH	DEBT/GDP RATIO (%)
Benin	47.7	Capo verde	12,3
Burkina faso	46.8	Gambia	73.9
Cote d'ivoire	46.3	Ghana	81.5
Guinea	42.3	Guinea bissau	78.1
Liberia	57.0	Sierra leone	70.4
Mali	46.1		
Niger	44.5		
Nigeria	31.9		
Senegal	66.8		
togo	66.0		

Impact on food system

The loss of households' livelihoods has limited access to food and the food security of households in the sub-region has significantly deteriorated. Nearly 25 million people are unable to meet their food needs, which is 34% higher than in 2020. The results of the March 2021 Cadre Harmonisé analysis showed that a high proportion of households have poor food consumption that lacks diversity. This is due to the low availability of food products coupled with higher prices due to the persistent impact of certain restrictive measures. This increase in food prices is the most perceptible impact of the crisis, affecting various staple products and thus affecting access to food.

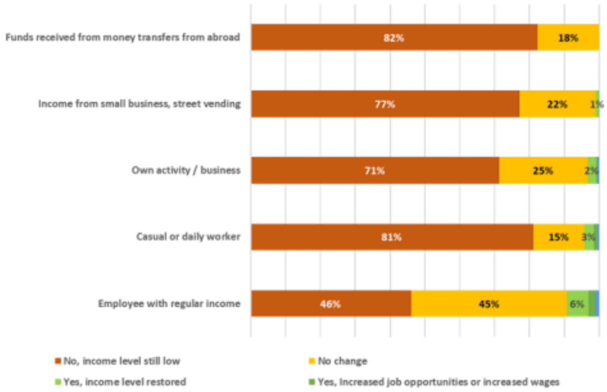
The availability of food products is still low, although it has improved since last year. Indeed, there was a 20% increase in the availability of basic food items in the markets between July 2020 and 2021 in urban areas and a smaller increase (5%) in rural areas.



Low improvement in household incomes despite the lifting of restriction measures

Moreover, the pandemic has negatively impacted hard-won gains in poverty reduction and inclusive growth. It is estimated that COVID-19 has increased the proportion of people living on less than USD 1.90 a day by 2.3% in 2020 and by 2.9% in 2021, leading to extreme poverty rates of 34.5% in 2020 and 34.4% in 2021 (AEO 2021 of the AfDB). The lockdowns in Africa have negatively impacted the sub-region's economy.

The recovery of the regional economy still shows signs of fragility and remains insufficient to enable households to return to their pre-crisis level of nutrition and economic wellbeing. Indeed, 62% of respondents indicate that their level of income is still low. The most affected socio-economic categories are households that depend on unstable and precarious sources of income, such as small-scale traders, street vendors and casual workers. Households that depend on remittances are also among the most heavily impacted by the effects of the pandemic. Indeed, the proportion of households surveyed that received remittances between 2020 (72%) and 2021 (54%) fell by around 20%, and the amounts received have also declined. Employees with regular income have been the least affected.



The education sector has not been spared the negative effects of the pandemic. In 2020, most schools in ECOWAS countries were closed in order to limit the spread of the virus. Currently, in 2021, the introduction of new preventative measures in schools, such as the installation of handwashing stations, physical distancing and wearing face masks, has facilitated the return of children to school.

In efforts to combat the spread of the pandemic, COVID-19 vaccines have been deployed in ECOWAS countries. In late July 2021, the proportion of the population vaccinated in Africa was 3.2% compared with 48.12% in Europe. Apart from Cabo Verde, which has a vaccination rate of 25.41%, the vaccination rate is low in most ECOWAS countries (below 4%). The majority of respondents were reluctant to get vaccinated due to a lack of confidence in and information about the vaccine, which concerns 46% of respondents. The unavailability of vaccines, mentioned by 40% of respondents, also partly explains the low rate of vaccination in the sub-region.

5. High food prices and market crisis

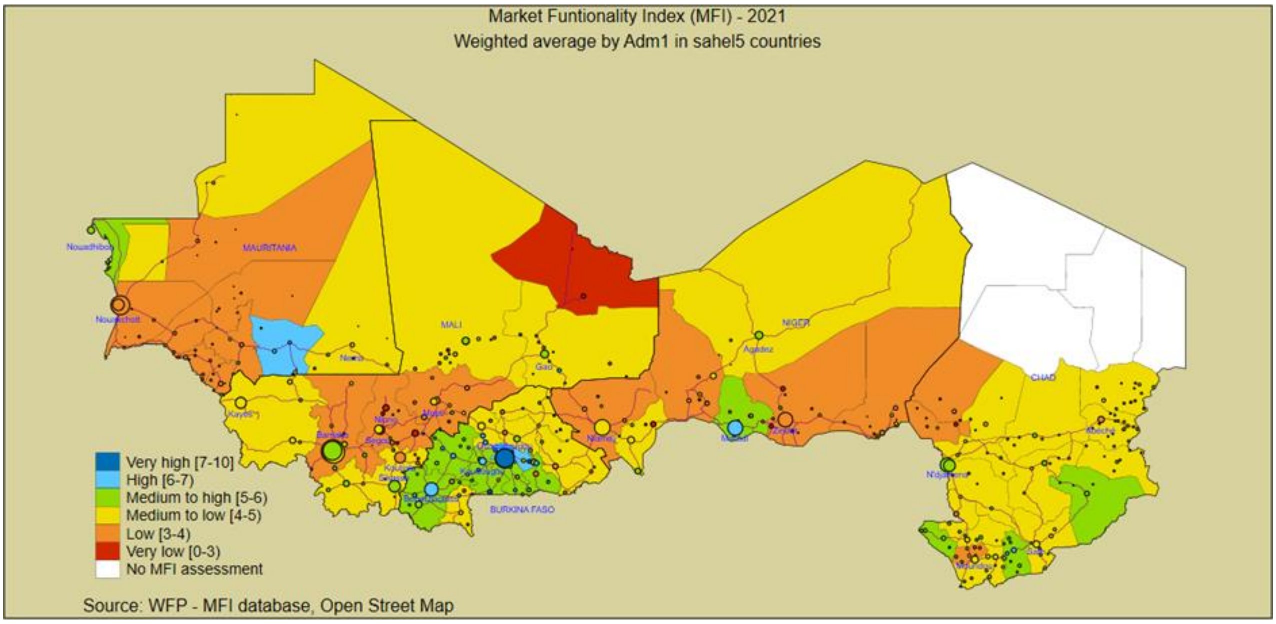
WFP released a new survey tool for market assessments called Market Functionality Index (MFI) in early 2020. The MFI aims to evaluate the level of functionality of marketplaces, whereby the concept of functionality encompasses several dimensions deemed essential to understand the interactions between traders and customers, and the transparency and predictability of the features ruling supplies and prices.

In 2021, WFP conducted MFI surveys in several countries in the region and particularly in Sahel G5 countries. In Mauritania, areas that depend almost exclusively on markets have higher MFI scores than those where agricultural production is relatively important. In this sense, the pastoral zone of Hodh el Garbi the pastoral zone in the southern part of the country, and Nouadhibou in the north-west, have high or medium-to-high MFI scores. At the same time, the agropastoral areas in the south of the country have relatively low MFI scores.

The insecure areas of Mopti in Mali are among the ones with the lowest MFI scores in the country. Both the diversity assortment of products on in the markets, their availability and prices are negatively impacted by the worsening security situation. At the same time, the capital city of Bamako, but especially Sikasso, stands out with medium-to-high MFI scores and high population coverage. The regions of Kayes and Sikasso, where agricultural production is fairly important, are handicapped by infrastructures that limits the functionality of markets in these zones, especially in rural areas.

Apart from the Sahel and Eastern regions of Burkina Faso, markets show good levels of functionality with high MFI scores around the capital Ouagadougou and Bobo Dioulasso, the country's second largest city. Even in the seriously insecure areas of the country, the markets visited as part of the current evaluation show better levels of functionality than their Malian counterparts in similar areas. However, these results may hide important disparities between departmental capitals that are secure and register an increase in demand driven by displaced people and rural areas where markets are no longer held and therefore totally non-functional and not visited.

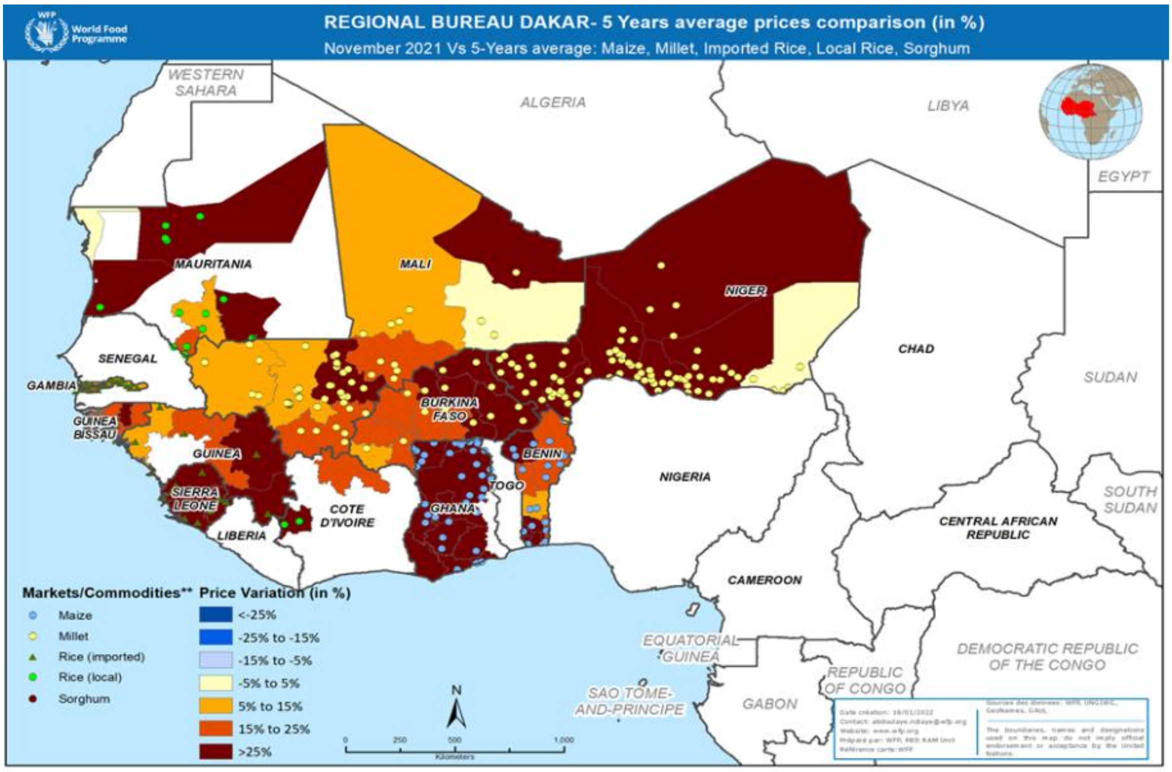
In Niger, the regions of Agadez (livestock area), Dosso (agricultural production area in the south close to Niamey), but and especially Maradi (directly connected to Nigeria for trade) are those in which the markets are most functional. In the west of the country (Tilaberi, and Tahoua regions) attacks by armed groups have been frequent throughout 2021, thus affecting both availability and price predictability.



Medium-to-high MFI scores are recorded in the south, southeast and in the capital of Chad, with the lowest scores in the Lake region where attacks by Boko Haram and other armed groups continue, affecting both local agricultural production and the supply of food and non-food goods in the markets.

The availability of food products is still low, although it has improved since last year. Indeed, there was a 20% increase in the availability of basic food items in the markets between July 2020 and 2021 in urban areas and a smaller increase (5%) in rural areas.

Both endogenous and exogenous factors are driving food price up. And despite the low health impact of COVID 19, the macroeconomic situation of the region does not look good. A joint study undertaken by ECOWAS with WFP and ECA support indicated that extreme poverty has increased by 3% between 2020 and 2021. Most of the countries of the region are facing an important budget deficit and increased public debt, limiting their ability to provide basic services and to import food.



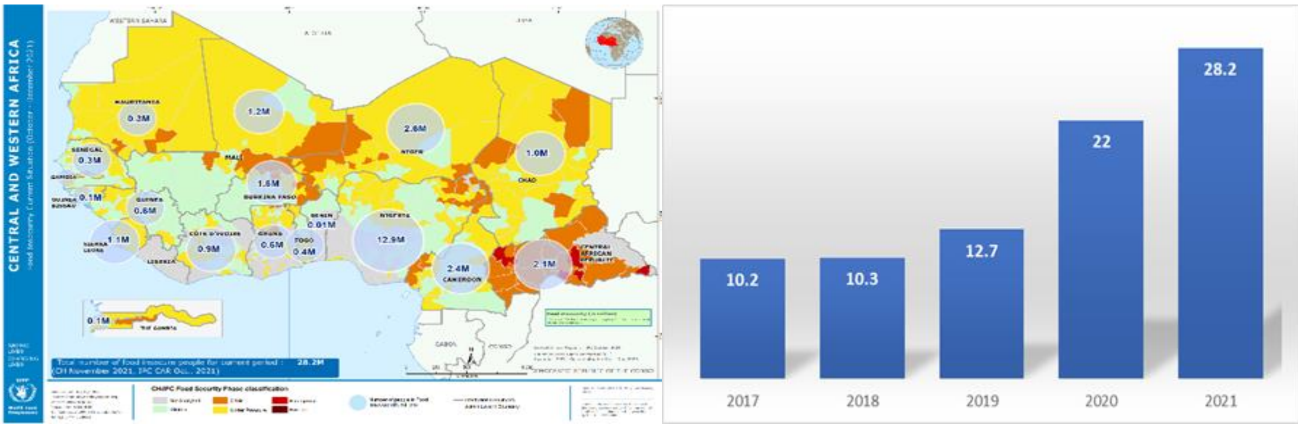
6. Food insecurity is expanding

Increasing food insecurity

Food insecurity in 2021-2022

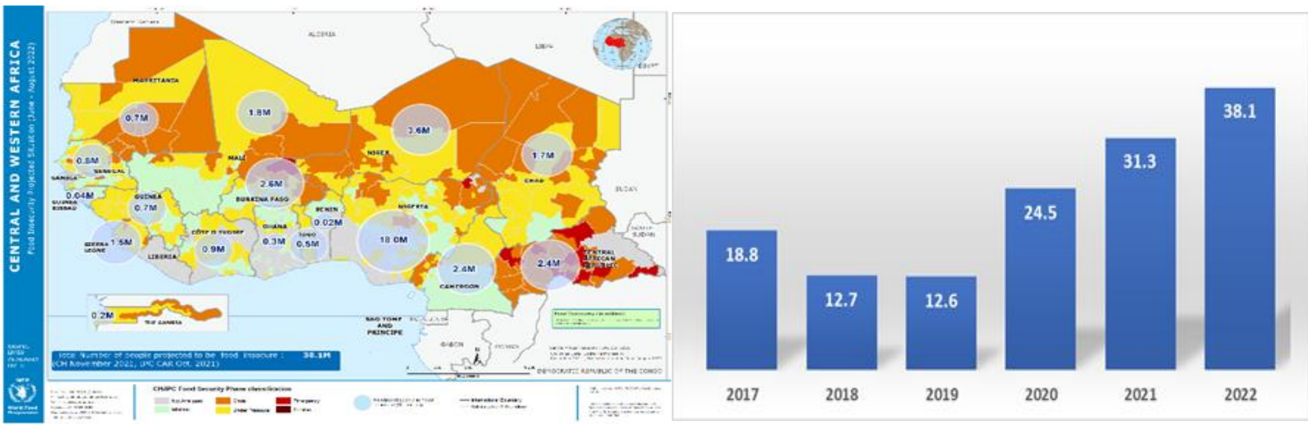
- The key contributing factors of food insecurity in the region in 2021/22 are continued insecurity in some areas, including the Lake Chad Basin, north-western Nigeria, as well as the Liptako-Gourma area of the Central Sahel. Particularly in the Central Sahel, the security situation has deteriorated further over the last year.
- Moreover, the erratic performance of the 2021 rainy season, which was characterised by low average rainfall totals, but which were poorly distributed in time and space, has affected crop and pasture production in some areas.
- Economic factors, including rampant inflation and high food prices, continue to affect the region, and some countries in particular – this includes coastal countries such as Sierra Leone, Ghana and Nigeria.
- The nutrition situation deteriorated compared to 2020, with worryingly high levels of acute malnutrition in parts of northern Nigeria, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and Chad.

Current level of Food Insecurity (October-December 2021)



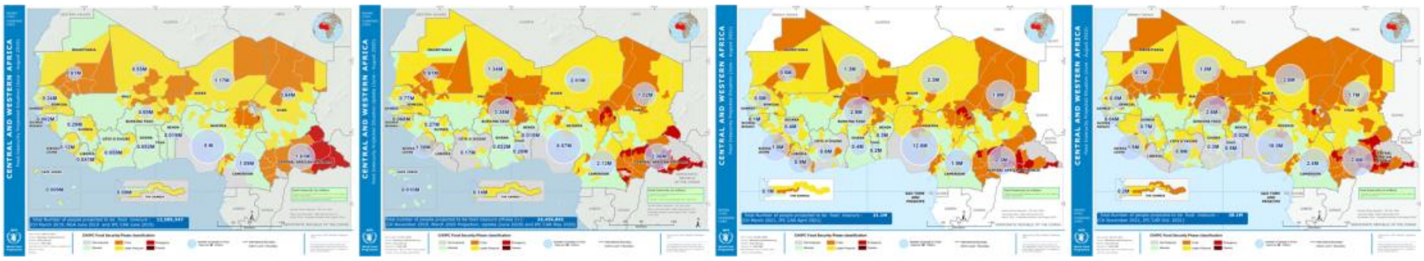
For the current period (October to December 2021) and the whole region, a total of **28.2 million people** are **in phase 3** and above, representing **8%** of the population analysed. Compared to the same period of last year there is an increase of **28.3%** in the figures.

Projected Level of Food Insecurity in the Lean Season (June-August 2022)



For the projected period (June to August 2022), a total of **38.1 million people** are expected to be in **phase 3** and above in the region, representing **11%** of the population analysed. This represents an increase of **21.7%** compared to last year.

Trend of Food Insecurity from 2019 – 2022 lean seasons

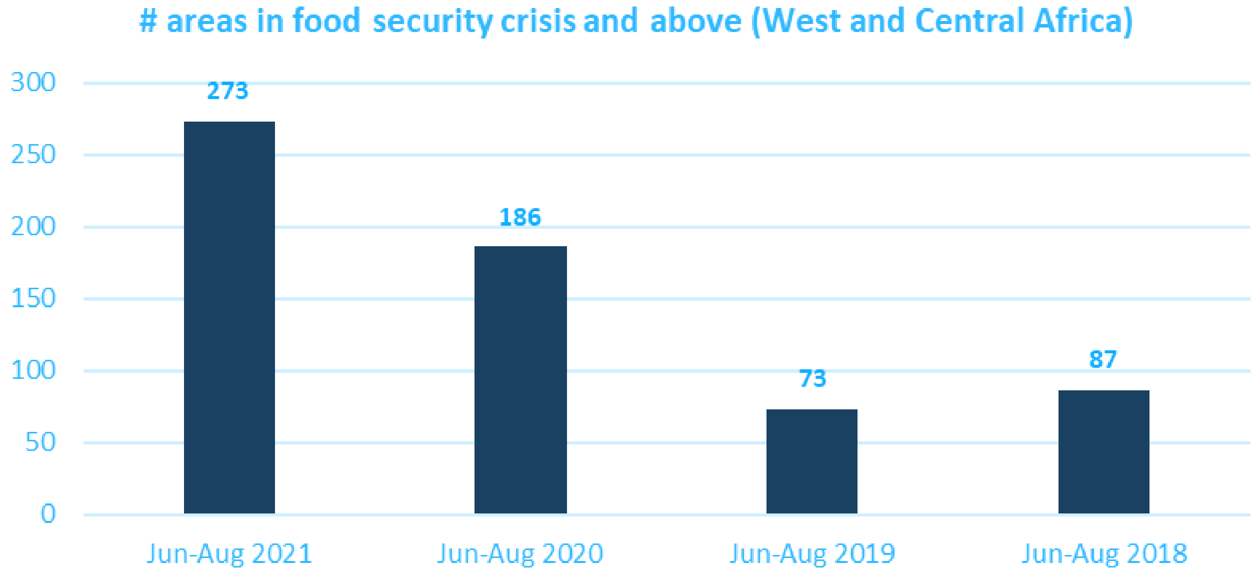


When comparing trends and overall figures it is important to note the following:

First, the coverage of the CH/IPC exercise can vary from one exercise to the next, making it difficult to compare overall figures across years. For instance, in Nigeria, 5 new states were analysed in 2021, meaning that the population analysed increased from around 108 million in 2020 to nearly 160 million in 2021. This partly accounts for increases in the number of food insecure populations in the country. Conversely, the coverage of the CH exercise in Benin has reduced significantly between 2020 and 2021.

Second, the CH process relies heavily on the type of data available to inform the exercise. Changes in data availability can lead to difference is the accuracy and/or representativity of the CH estimates. For instance, the CH analysis for Togo was done at the regional level in 2021, while in previous years, estimates were available at the district level. Similarly, in some countries, the type of data available for the analysis changed – for instance, in some countries HEA was used for the first time to inform the CH exercise (Sierra Leone), or the only data source available in the absence of household surveys (Benin).

These factors need to be considered when interpreting the CH results and analysing historical trends.



7. Hotspot Analysis

The Food Security and Nutrition Hotspot Analysis is an exercise conducted by WFP and UNICEF after each round of food security and nutrition assessments in the West and Central Africa region, usually in line with the Cadre Harmonisé (CH). The analysis is done in three steps. First, the results of the CH are reclassified into four priority levels, to determine the food security hotspots. Second, a combination of 29 quantitative and qualitative indicators are analysed to determine the nutrition hotspots, using a scientifically validated context-specific methodology developed for the Sahel region. Third, the two analyses are integrated to determine joint food security and nutrition hotspot areas, to inform operational response and advocacy.

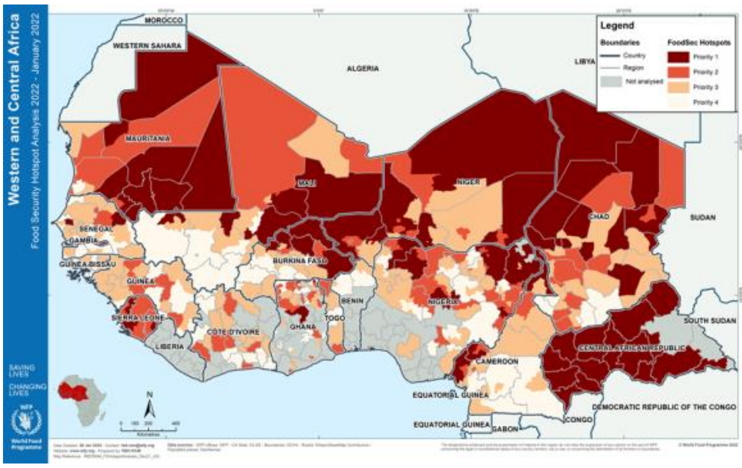
To ensure consistency with previous exercises, the following methodology was used to determine the food security hotspots/priority areas:

- Priority 1: all administrative areas classified in CH Phase 3; or with ≥20% of the population are in CH Phase 3-5; or with ≥5,000 people in Phase 4 or above.
- Priority 2: all remaining administrative areas classified in CH Phase 2 and with >10% of the population in CH Phase 3-5.
- Priority 3: all remaining CH Phase 2 admin areas.
- Priority 4: remaining administrative areas (i.e. areas not meeting above criteria).

Both the October-December 2021 estimates and the June-August 2022 projection were considered to determine the priority areas, given that countries in the region have different seasonal patterns.

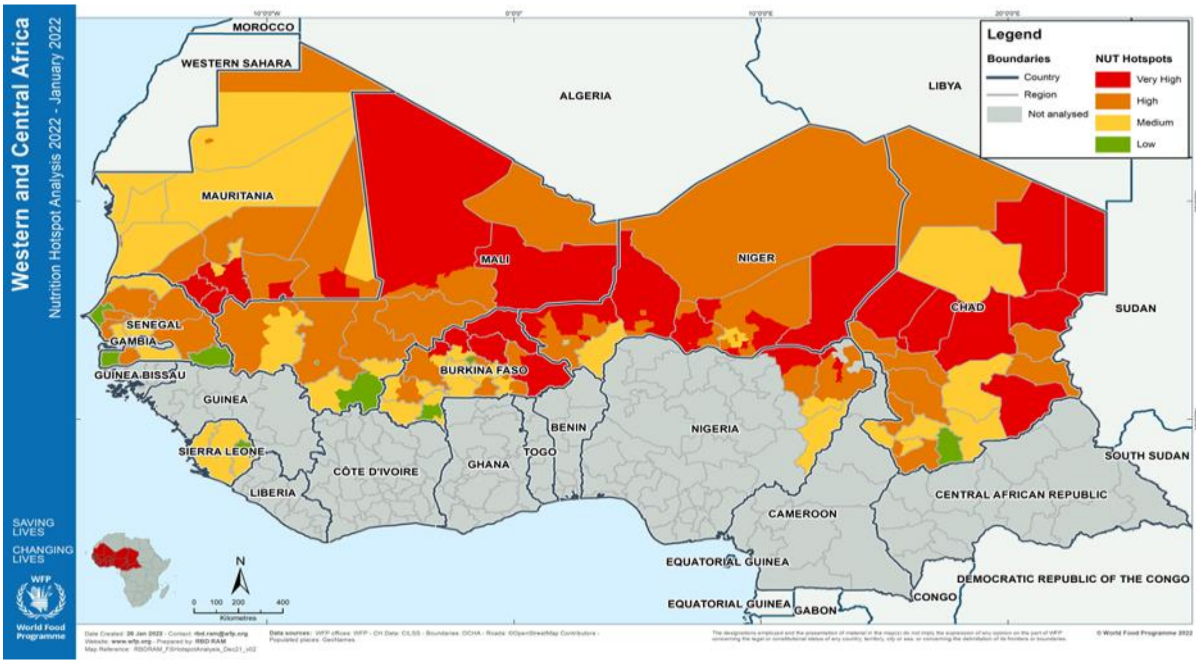
The results of the food security hotspot analysis suggest that, for the projected period (Jun-Aug 2022), out of the estimated 38.1 million food insecure people in the West and Central Africa region, **17.3 million people live in Priority 1 areas**, **11.7 million live in Priority 2 areas**, **6.4 million live in Priority 3 areas** and 2.8 million live in Priority 4 areas (see table below):.

The following map highlights the food security hotspot areas. These include most of the Sahel, as well as North-West and South-West regions of Cameroon, and most of CAR. The high number of Priority 1 areas translates the food crisis which the region faces in 2022.



		Current Phase		Projected Phase	
		Areas	People	Areas	People
Priority 1	*All administrative 2 areas classified in CH Phase 3; or with ≥20% of the population are in CH Phase 3-5; or with ≥5,000 people in Phase 4 or above*	148	**8,149,283**	279	**17,263,309**
Priority 2	*All remaining administrative 2 areas classified in CH Phase 2 and with 10-19.99% of the population in CH Phase 3-5*	237	**10,706,959**	209	**11,731,702**
Priority 3	*All remaining CH Phase 2 admin2 areas*	198	**4,780,842**	287	**6,384,719**
Priority 4	*Remaining administrative 2 areas (i.e. areas not meeting above criteria)*	474	**4,557,652**	282	**2,757,411**
Total		**1,057**	**28,194,736**	**1,057**	**38,137,141**

With regards to nutrition, the following map highlights areas of high concern. Overall, 2.4 million children under 5 years old are expected to suffer from wasting (MAM & SAM) in very high priority areas, of which over 570,000 are severely malnourished. In high priority areas, 3.3 million children under 5 are expected to suffer from wasting, of which over 780,000 are severely malnourished.



The integration of the food security and nutrition hotspot analysis was conducted based on the following approach and recommandations:

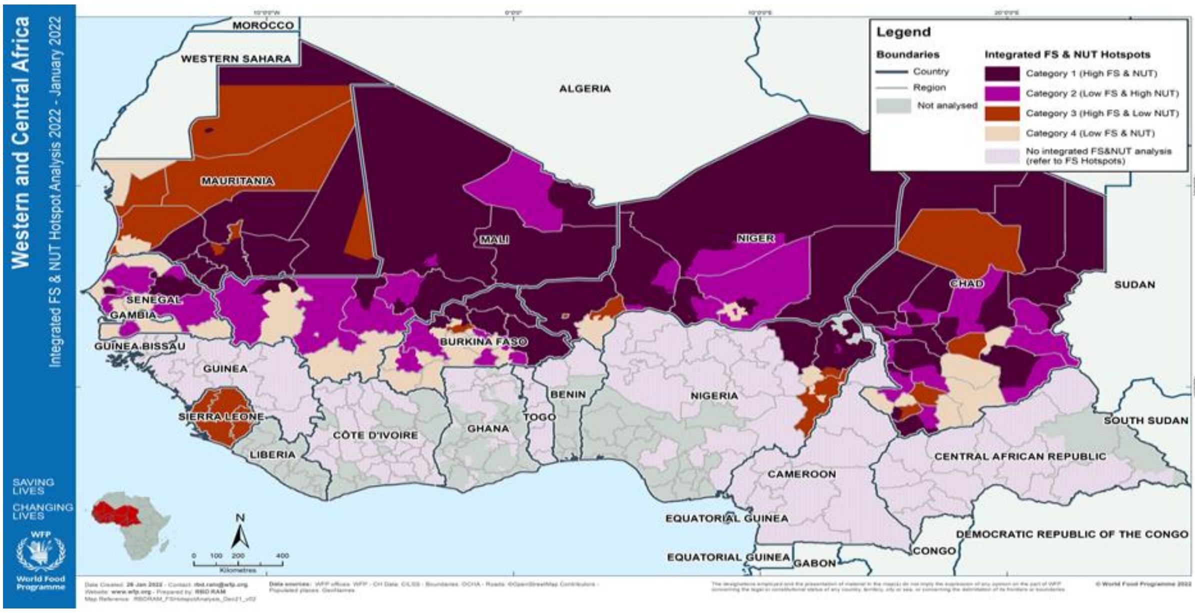
Category 1 areas are high-priority areas for both Food Security and Nutrition interventions. A combined Food Security (FS) & Nutrition (NUT) emergency response is recommended.

Category 2 areas are high-priority areas for NUT interventions, with a medium to low FS priority. A focus on nutrition interventions is recommended, where possible in association with a FS response.

Category 3 areas are high-priority areas for emergency FS interventions. A focus on the FS response is recommended, with a close eye on NUT factors.

Category 4 areas are lower priority areas for both FS and NUT interventions. A focus on addressing underlying causes of food and nutrition insecurity and/or risk reduction is recommended.

The following map shows the integrated food security and nutrition hotspots. Out of 401 administrative areas analysed, 168 areas (42%) were classified as category 1, 85 (21%) as category 2, 59 (15%) as category 3 and 88 (22%) as category 4.



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