



GIEWS Country Brief The Central African Republic

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FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT

- Concerns over 2016 cropping season due to protracted and widespread insecurity; strong livelihood support required
- Food access severely constrained by destroyed livelihoods, reduced own production and sharply curtailed market activity
- Alarming food security situation for large segments of the population

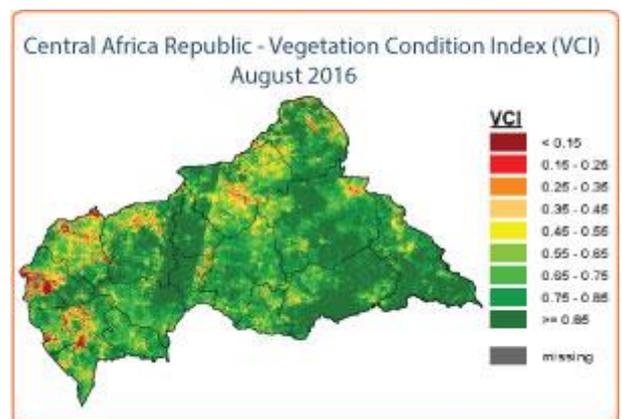
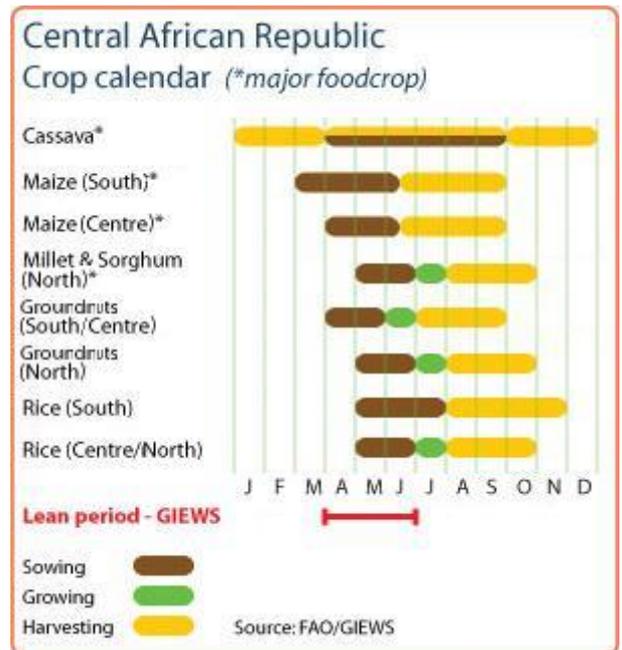
Concerns over 2016 cropping season, strong livelihood support required

In bi-modal rainfall areas of the Centre and the South, harvesting of the main maize crop is almost complete, while in the uni-modal North the sorghum and millet harvests will be concluded in October.

According to remote sensing analysis, cumulative rainfall from March to August was up to 47 percent above average and evenly distributed both spatially and temporally over most cropping areas, with the exception of some southwestern parts (Mambéré-Kadéï, Sangha-Mbaéré, Lobaye and Ombella-M'Poko prefectures), where rains in July were 14-33 percent below average. However, in these areas, the dry spell in July did not completely erode the moisture surpluses accumulated over the previous months of abundant rainfall and in August vegetation conditions were generally good across the country.

Despite the favourable weather conditions, agricultural operations continue to be severely affected by widespread conflict, which resulted in large scale displacement, caused input shortages and depleted households' productive assets that were already inadequate. A reduced agricultural output for the fourth consecutive year is likely. A timely and effective support to the agricultural sector is required to mitigate the extent of the impact of the protracted and widespread insecurity on the agricultural sector.

To help avert a full-scale nutrition and food security crisis in the coming months and to respond to the needs of the crisis-hit farmers, FAO, along with WFP and NGO partners, has provided, as of July, crop production support to 62 200 vulnerable households across the country. For the main planting season, each assisted family was provided with 31 kg of crop seeds and three hoes, and with WFP's provision of seed protection rations.



In addition, about 712 000 heads of cattle and 138 000 small ruminants have been vaccinated, benefiting 18 000 households, with the programme expected to continue until May 2017.

Despite declining rates of inflation, access to food is still constrained

The average inflation rate, which surged from 6.6 percent to 11.6 percent in 2014 as the political crisis caused the collapse of the economy and a sharp increase in prices, declined to 5.4 percent in 2015 and is forecast to further decrease to 4.9 percent. However, the decline in prices is partly due to a serious decrease in demand, as purchasing power of households is constrained by destroyed livelihoods, reduced employment opportunities and availability of cash.

As a result of these factors, the population of the Central African Republic is facing serious food access constraints. In addition, not only the quantity of food intake is reduced, but the dietary diversity is also drastically diminished by the substitution of more nutritious cereal and vegetable staples with cassava and the sharp reduction of animal proteins intake. This widespread dietary deterioration raises serious concerns of having a dire effect in terms of nutrition and health.

Alarming food security situation for large segments of population

The acute and complex emergency affecting the Central African Republic has resulted in widespread disruption in agricultural and marketing activities and caused massive displacement, thus having a severe negative impact on both food availability and access. The IDP caseload declined in 2016 following a relative improvement of the security situation in some areas of the country and, in late August, it was estimated at 386 000, 14 percent less than the peak recorded in November 2015, after the resurgence of inter-communal violence in the capital, Bangui, and in other areas of the country. However, the security situation continues to be volatile, with episodes of violence causing losses of life and new displacements. For instance, clashes in northwestern Ouham and Ouham-Pendé prefectures in April have disrupted relief activities and resulted in the displacement of more than 30 000 individuals.

Three consecutive years of reduced harvests, compounded by access constraints due to market disruptions and declining purchasing power, resulted in an alarming food security situation. According to the latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), valid for the period from August to December 2016, about 2 million people (40 percent of the total population), are in need of urgent assistance (IPC Phase 3: “Crisis” and IPC Phase 4: “Emergency”). Ten out of sixteen prefectures are in IPC Phase 3: “Crisis”, while Vakaga Prefecture, Kabo and Batangafo sub-prefectures (Ouham Prefecture), Ngaoundaye sub-prefecture (Ouham Pendé prefecture) and Mbrès sub-prefecture (Nana-Gribizi Prefecture) are in IPC Phase 4: “Emergency”.

In response, the international community launched in November 2015 a Strategic Response Plan, aiming to assist 1.9 million beneficiaries for a total cost of USD 531 million. As of 31 August, only 28 percent (about USD 149 million) of funding has been received.

