MALAWI

High levels of acute food insecurity in Malawi due to climate-related shocks, economic decline and high food prices in both rural and urban areas

IPC ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY ANALYSIS

JUNE 2022 - MARCH 2023

Published on August 8, 2022

CURRENT ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY JUNE - SEPTEMBER 2022

2.6 M

14% of the population analysed

People facing high acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above)

IN NEED OF URGENT ACTION

Phase 5	0 People in Catastrophe
Phase 4	0 People in Emergency
Phase 3	2,600,000 People in Crisis
Phase 2	6,484,000 People Stressed
Phase 1	10,200,000 People in food security

PROJECTED ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY OCTOBER 2022 - MARCH 2023

3.8 M

20% of the population analysed

People facing high acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or above)

IN NEED OF URGENT ACTION

Phase 5	0 People in Catastrophe
Phase 4	0 People in Emergency
Phase 3	3,822,000 People in Crisis
Phase 2	6,680,000 People Stressed
Phase 1	8,815,000 People in food security

Overview

Between June and September 2022, an estimated 2.6 million people representing 13% of the country population are experiencing high acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3, Crisis) in the 28 districts and four cities of Malawi. Urgent action is required to protect livelihoods and reduce food consumption gaps. A further 6.5 million people are in IPC Phase 2 (Stress) and require action for disaster risk reduction and livelihood protection. Six districts are overall classified in Crisis (IPC Phase 3), these are: Chikwawa, Lilongwe City, Mulanje, Mwanza, Neno and Nsanje. Key factors driving this situation are: the various climatic shocks experienced throughout the district, mainly dry spells, cyclones and floods, leading to below average crop production; economic decline, including the effects of the Ukraine-Russia conflict on fuel and commodity prices, the 25 percent devaluation of the Malawi Kwacha, high input prices, leading to high costs of production and low purchasing power; and the continued high food inflation leading to high food prices.

Between October 2022 and March 2023, the situation is expected to deteriorate, with 3.8 million people in Malawi (20% of the population) expected to face high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3), an increase by 8% compared to the current period. The number of districts classified in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) is estimated to increase from six to 21 including the four cities. This likely deterioration is attributed to seasonal factors, as this period coincides with the lean season, and a high proportion of the population starting to deplete their food stocks; the continued impact of the war in Ukraine on food prices; potential reduced internal food productions due to high prices of inputs and possible climatic shocks; reduced labour opportunities and wages; and shortage of food stocks.

Key Drivers

Climate-Related Shocks:

All districts experienced late onset and early cessation of rainfall coupled with localized dry spells. Southern region districts were affected by cyclones. Further, Salima, Lilongwe, Nkhotakota, and Dowa in the Centre; Phalombe, Zomba, Balaka, Chiradzulu, Blantyre, Chikwawa, Nsanje and Mulanje in the South; and Chitipa and Karonga in the North experienced flush floods which resulted in low production.

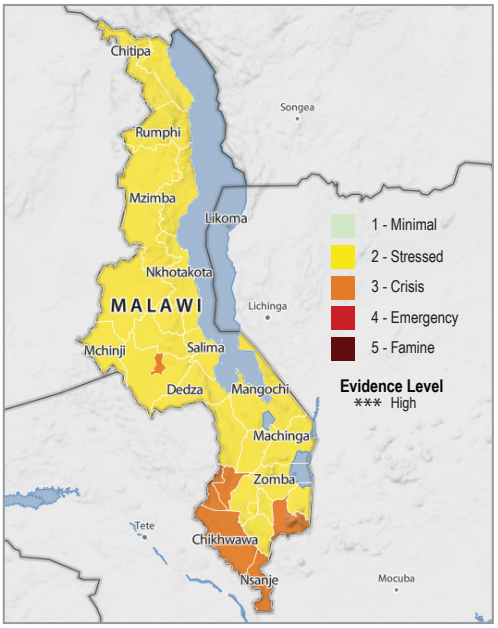
High Staple Prices:

In addition to the low production compared to last year, maize prices are generally higher than the past five-year average mainly on account of foreign demand from neighbouring countries and due to increases in prices of basic commodities. This includes higher prices for agricultural inputs, which farmers are expected to incur during the winter cropping and next agricultural season, thereby reducing food access of foreign exchange and leading to scarcity of certain products. Urgent action is required to avoid this deterioration.

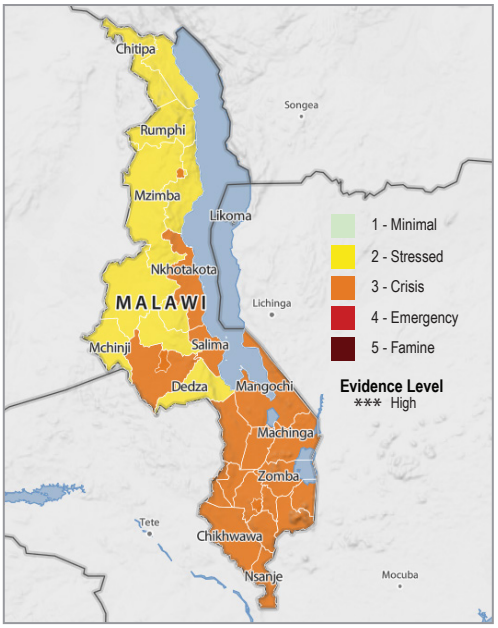
Economic Decline:

The 25% devaluation of the Malawi Kwacha in May 2022 resulted in high inflation. Further, the war in Ukraine which started in February 2022 has disrupted global supply chains, exerting further upward pressures on prices of essential items including fertilizers, fuel, cooking oil and wheat products. As a result, headline inflation increased to 19.1% in May 2022 compared to 8.9% in May 2021, thereby reducing food access for urban populations.

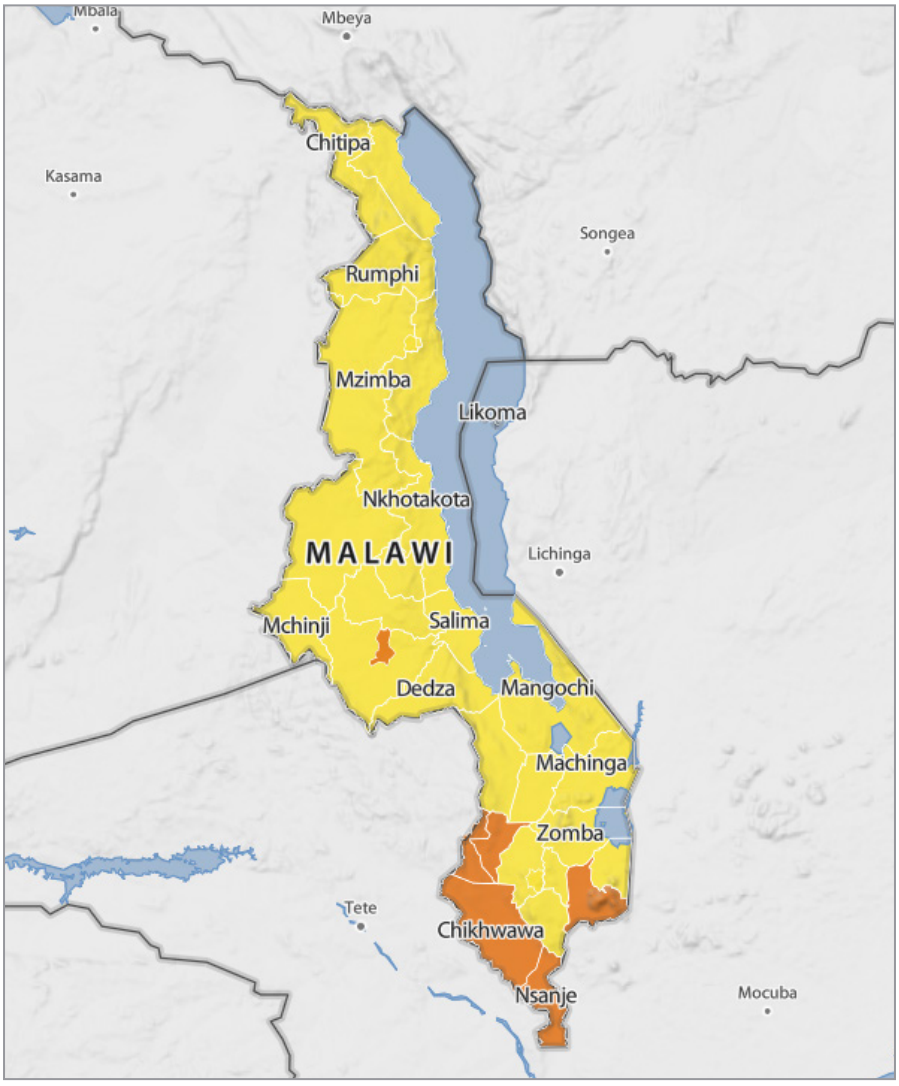
Current Situation June - September 2022



Projected Situation Oct 2022 - March 2023



CURRENT IPC ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY MAP AND POPULATION TABLE (JUNE – SEPTEMBER 2022)



Key for the Map

IPC Acute Food Insecurity Phase Classification

(mapped Phase represents highest severity affecting at least 20% of the population)

- 1 - Minimal
- 2 - Stressed
- 3 - Crisis
- 4 - Emergency
- 5 - Famine

Evidence Level

*** High

Population table for the current period: June – September 2022

District	Total population analysed*	Phase 1		Phase 2		Phase 3		Phase 4		Phase 5		Area Phase	Phase 3+	
		#people	%	#people	%	#people	%	#people	%	#people	%		#people	%
Balaka	490,804	196,322	40	220,862	45	73,621	15	0	0	0	0	2	73,621	15
Blantyre	497,589	223,915	45	199,036	40	74,638	15	0	0	0	0	2	74,638	15
Blantyre city	858,076	429,038	50	300,327	35	128,711	15	0	0	0	0	2	128,711	15
Chikhwawa	615,685	246,274	40	215,490	35	153,921	25	0	0	0	0	3	153,921	25
Chiradzulu	383,559	230,135	60	115,068	30	38,356	10	0	0	0	0	2	38,356	10
Chitipa	251,830	188,873	75	50,366	20	12,592	5	0	0	0	0	2	12,592	5
Dedza	908,487	545,092	60	272,546	30	90,849	10	0	0	0	0	2	90,849	10
Dowa	857,510	471,631	55	257,253	30	128,627	15	0	0	0	0	2	128,627	15
Karonga	397,097	238,258	60	119,129	30	39,710	10	0	0	0	0	2	39,710	10
Kasungu	928,471	696,353	75	185,694	20	46,424	5	0	0	0	0	2	46,424	5
Likoma	15,691	14,122	90	1,569	10	-	0	0	0	0	0	1	-	0
Lilongwe	1,791,821	716,728	40	806,319	45	268,773	15	0	0	0	0	2	268,773	15
Lilongwe city	1,126,143	563,072	50	337,843	30	225,229	20	0	0	0	0	3	225,229	20
Machinga	845,076	380,284	45	338,030	40	126,761	15	0	0	0	0	2	126,761	15
Mangochi	1,305,432	848,531	65	261,086	20	195,815	15	0	0	0	0	2	195,815	15
Mchinji	658,470	362,159	55	230,465	35	65,847	10	0	0	0	0	2	65,847	10
Mulanje	749,359	337,212	45	262,276	35	149,872	20	0	0	0	0	3	149,872	20
Mwanza	147,976	73,988	50	44,393	30	29,595	20	0	0	0	0	3	29,595	20
Mzimba	1,001,929	551,061	55	400,772	40	50,096	5	0	0	0	0	2	50,096	5
Mzuzu city	261,578	156,947	60	78,473	30	26,158	10	0	0	0	0	2	26,158	10
Neno	147,272	73,636	50	44,182	30	29,454	20	0	0	0	0	3	29,454	20
Nkhata bay	304,556	182,734	60	91,367	30	30,456	10	0	0	0	0	2	30,456	10
Nkhotakota	428,355	235,595	55	128,507	30	64,253	15	0	0	0	0	2	64,253	15
Nsanje	321,535	128,614	40	112,537	35	80,384	25	0	0	0	0	3	80,384	25
Ntcheu	735,941	367,971	50	294,376	40	73,594	10	0	0	0	0	2	73,594	10
Ntchisi	356,232	178,116	50	142,493	40	35,623	10	0	0	0	0	2	35,623	10
Phalombe	477,929	262,861	55	143,379	30	71,689	15	0	0	0	0	2	71,689	15
Rumphi	248,930	161,805	65	62,233	25	24,893	10	0	0	0	0	2	24,893	10
Salima	535,981	321,589	60	133,995	25	80,397	15	0	0	0	0	2	80,397	15
Thyolo	770,860	385,430	50	308,344	40	77,086	10	0	0	0	0	2	77,086	10
Zomba	814,315	407,158	50	285,010	35	122,147	15	0	0	0	0	2	122,147	15
Zomba city	114,464	57,232	50	40,062	35	17,170	15	0	0	0	0	2	17,170	15
Grand Total	**19,348,953**	**10,232,732**	**53**	**6,483,481**	**34**	**2,632,740**	**14**	**0**	**0**	0	**0**		**2,632,740**	**14**

Note: A population in Phase 3+ does not necessarily reflect the full population in need of urgent action. This is because some households may be in Phase 2 or even 1 but only because of receipt of assistance, therefore they may be in need of continued action. Marginal inconsistencies that may arise in the overall percentages of totals and grand totals are attributable to rounding.

CURRENT SITUATION OVERVIEW (JUNE – SEPTEMBER 2022)

In the current period of analysis, 2.6 million people (representing 14% of the population analyzed) are facing IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) and 6.6 million people mild acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 2, Stress) while 10.2 million people face none/ minimal food insecurity (IPC Phase 1). Just over half of the population (53%) is food secure, and most districts analyzed are classified in IPC Phase 2 (Stress). All districts in the Northern Region are classified in IPC Phase 2 (Stress). Similarly all districts in Central region (except Lilongwe city) are in IPC Phase 2 (Stress). In the Southern region, five districts, namely: Neno, Mwanza, Chikwawa, Nsanje and Mulanje are classified in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis). All cities are in IPC Phase 2 (Stress) excluding Lilongwe City, having 20% of the city population in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis).

The main reason for the relatively stressed situation are increased price of food basket. According to FEWS NET price data, in nearly all monitored markets, the price of maize staples in May ranged between 184 MWK to 250 MWK. Compared to the same period last year, maize prices were higher by 31 to 214 percent and between 47 to 207 percent higher than the five-year average. The increasing price trends are atypical, as prices typically decrease between March and June before they start rising seasonally.

The country is facing a significant reduction of production of main staples. In the current period, maize production is estimated at 25 to 35 percent below average, especially in the southern region, due to low amount of rainfall, floods induced by the tropical storm Ana, and low access to fertilizer by smallholder farmers in rural areas.

The vast majority of the 2.6 million people in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) are in rural areas that experienced a deficit in crop production due to climatic shocks in the Southern Region, and a low amount of rainfall in the Northern and Central regions. For these rural households, the level of stocks will remain low, forcing them to rely on the markets earlier than normal and for longer periods than usual for their food supply.

Looking at long-term trends, the IPC acute food insecurity analysis of July 2019 classified 720,000 people in Crisis (IPC Phase 3), the IPC acute analysis of July 2020 had 1.7 million people in crisis (IPC Phase 3) and IPC acute analysis of July 2021 had 1.06 million people in crisis (IPC Phase 3). The current analysis shows that the population in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) has now reached over 2.6 million. This negative trend is expected to continue. The Malawi IPC Chronic Food Insecurity Analysis conducted in March 2021 shows that 5.4 million people in Malawi face Moderate or Severe chronic food insecurity (IPC CFI Levels 3 and 4) with abject poverty and recurrent shocks among the key drivers.

Main Outcomes

In areas classified in IPC Phase 3 in the Southern region of Malawi and Lilongwe city (Crisis), the Food Consumption Scores (FCS) are concerning. The highest prevalence of poor FCS (indicative of the IPC Phase 3) is 50% in Chikwawa district and the lowest is 22% in Lilongwe City. In the areas in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) slightly over 30% of households consumed between three and four food groups in the 24 hours prior to the collection of data (Household Dietary Diversity Score indicative of IPC Phase 3) while in Lilongwe city slightly over 20% of households consumed between three and four food groups. Regarding strategies related to food consumption, over 40% of households in the Crisis districts are employing strategies indicative of IPC Phase 3 and 35% in Lilongwe city are employing strategies indicative of IPC Phase 2. The Household Hunger Scale presents an indicative phase of Crisis (IPC Phase 3) for over 20% of households in all the districts classified in IPC Phase 3 in the current period. For Lilongwe City 25% of households have Household Hunger Scale indicative of Crisis (IPC Phase 3). Regarding Livelihood Strategies, over 13% of households in the districts are employing Crisis strategies, and Lilongwe City has over 28% employing Crisis strategies in the current period.

The outcome indicators are high because when the data was collected, harvesting hadn't finished and so people had not started consuming from own production. This implies that the overall food consumption will be better in the current period than shown through the indicators.

Urban Areas

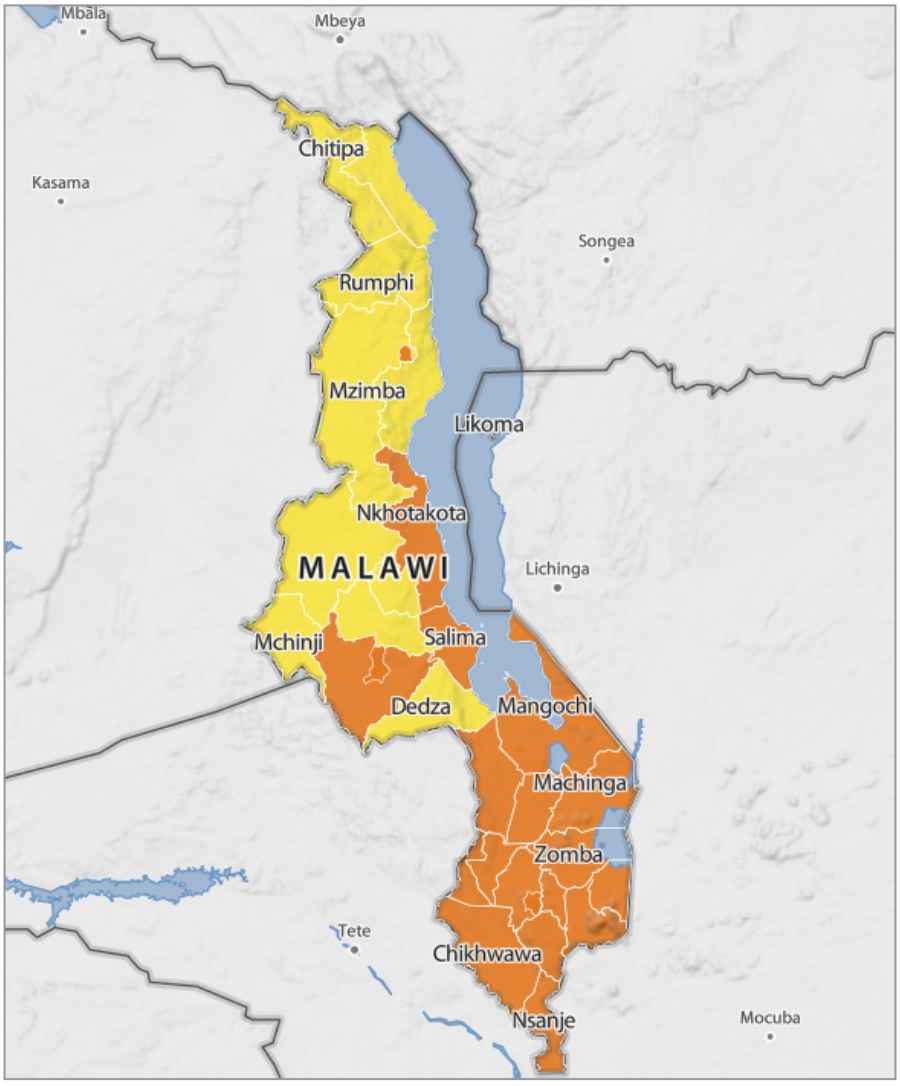
In the current period, out of the 2,360,261 people living in urban areas (Mzuzu, Lilongwe, Zomba and Blantyre cities), 397,268 people are facing Crisis acute food insecurity, representing 17% of the urban population. Lilongwe city has been classified in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) while the other three districts have been classified in IPC Phase 2 (Stressed). The main reasons for this classification are high staple prices due to low production and high inflation which has eroded the purchasing power of the population. The low agricultural production this year compared to last year as well as increasing demand for Malawi maize from East African countries due to low production has resulted in lower internal availability and higher maize prices compared to 2021. The war in Ukraine has disrupted the global supply chain, resulting in high prices due to its impact on the prices of fuel, cooking oil, agricultural inputs and other basic commodities.

In the cities of Mzuzu, Blantyre, Zomba and Lilongwe the cost of living has increased while labour opportunities have remained constant. Lilongwe city, which is classified in in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis), faces the worst food insecurity records in urban domains. The food prices of key commodities are higher this season than the previous season mostly due to increasing costs of other basic needs competing with food purchase, such as the cost of living. The erosion of purchasing power is further aggravated by the devaluation of the currency by 25% to MK 1028 compared to 823 MK per dollar in March 2022. Food consumption indicators and coping strategies indicate that most households are not able to meet their food requirements in the city.

Humanitarian Food Assistance

Currently, no significant humanitarian assistance is being received by the population in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) in all the areas that were targeted. Government and key humanitarian assistance partners have no plans to respond to the current population in Crisis (IPC Phase 3). Given that the period of June to September 2022 is the post -harvest period, it is expected that no humanitarian assistance will be provided as is the tradition, as households will continue to depend on their own production or through their social networks. Humanitarian food assistance is likely to occur in the projected period starting in November 2022 to March 2023.

PROJECTED IPC ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY MAP AND POPULATION TABLE (OCTOBER 2022 – MARCH 2023)



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Evidence Level

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Population table for the projected period: October 2022 – March 2023

District	Total population analysed*	Phase 1		Phase 2		Phase 3		Phase 4		Phase 5		Area Phase	Phase 3+	
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Blantyre city	858,076	300,327	35	343,230	40	214,519	25	0	0	0	0	3	214,519	25
Chikhwawa	615,685	153,921	25	246,274	40	215,490	35	0	0	0	0	3	215,490	35
Chiradzulu	383,559	191,780	50	115,068	30	76,712	20	0	0	0	0	3	76,712	20
Chitipa	251,830	151,098	60	75,549	30	25,183	10	0	0	0	0	2	25,183	10
Dedza	908,487	454,244	50	317,970	35	136,273	15	0	0	0	0	2	136,273	15
Dowa	857,510	514,506	60	257,253	30	85,751	10	0	0	0	0	2	85,751	10
Karonga	397,097	218,403	55	119,129	30	59,565	15	0	0	0	0	2	59,565	15
Kasungu	928,471	649,930	70	185,694	20	92,847	10	0	0	0	0	2	92,847	10
Likoma	15,691	10,984	70	4,707	30	-	0	0	0	0	0	2	-	0
Lilongwe	1,791,821	806,319	45	627,137	35	358,364	20	0	0	0	0	3	358,364	20
Lilongwe city	1,126,143	281,536	25	506,764	45	337,843	30	0	0	0	0	3	337,843	30
Machinga	845,076	338,030	40	338,030	40	169,015	20	0	0	0	0	3	169,015	20
Mangochi	1,305,432	717,988	55	326,358	25	261,086	20	0	0	0	0	3	261,086	20
Mchinji	658,470	329,235	50	230,465	35	98,771	15	0	0	0	0	2	98,771	15
Mulanje	733,068	293,227	40	219,920	30	219,920	30	0	0	0	0	3	219,920	30
Mwanza	147,976	59,190	40	51,792	35	36,994	25	0	0	0	0	3	36,994	25
Mzimba	1,001,929	500,965	50	400,772	40	100,193	10	0	0	0	0	2	100,193	10
Mzuzu city	261,578	117,710	45	91,552	35	52,316	20	0	0	0	0	3	52,316	20
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Nkhata bay	304,556	152,278	50	106,595	35	45,683	15	0	0	0	0	2	45,683	15
Nkhotakota	428,355	192,760	45	149,924	35	85,671	20	0	0	0	0	3	85,671	20
Nsanje	321,535	96,461	30	112,537	35	112,537	35	0	0	0	0	3	112,537	35
Ntcheu	735,941	294,376	40	294,376	40	147,188	20	0	0	0	0	3	147,188	20
Ntchisi	346,154	173,077	50	121,154	35	51,923	15	0	0	0	0	2	51,923	15
Phalombe	477,929	215,068	45	167,275	35	95,586	20	0	0	0	0	3	95,586	20
Rumphi	243,811	134,096	55	73,143	30	36,572	15	0	0	0	0	2	36,572	15
Salima	535,981	294,790	55	133,995	25	107,196	20	0	0	0	0	3	107,196	20
Thyolo	770,860	346,887	45	269,801	35	154,172	20	0	0	0	0	3	154,172	20
Zomba	814,315	325,726	40	325,726	40	162,863	20	0	0	0	0	3	162,863	20
Zomba city	114,464	45,786	40	45,786	40	22,893	20	0	0	0	0	3	22,893	20
Grand Total	**19,317,465**	**8,815,301**	**46**	**6,679,662**	**35**	**3,822,502**	**20**	**0**	**0**	0	**0**		**3,822,502**	**20**

Note: A population in Phase 3+ does not necessarily reflect the full population in need of urgent action. This is because some households may be in Phase 2 or even 1 but only because of receipt of assistance, therefore they may be in need of continued action. Marginal inconsistencies that may arise in the overall percentages of totals and grand totals are attributable to rounding.

PROJECTED SITUATION OVERVIEW (OCTOBER 2022 – MARCH 2023)

Between October 2022 and March 2023, the food security situation is expected to deteriorate further, with 3.8 million people in Malawi expected to face high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3, Crisis). The number of districts classified in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) will also likely to increase from six to 21 out of 28 areas analysed. Most of the people in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis), accounting for 3.2 million people, live in rural areas, while 628,000 are located in the four cities of Blantyre, Zomba, Lilongwe and Mzuzu. A further, 6.7 million people are likely to be in IPC Phase 2 (Stress). These households live in the areas characterized by low levels of production, multiple shocks including tropical cyclones, pests and diseases, and are affected by the impacts of inflation and the war in Ukraine which is likely to continue in the projected period.

With a decrease in national production by 24% compared to the previous year in the south, by 19% in the north and by 13% in the central region, the households' stocks level is likely to be significantly below average. The maize production decrease compared to the five-year average was slight, ranging between 4% and 8%, with the highest reductions in the south. However, in some of the districts in the center and northern regions, production was slightly above the five-year average. Households will face food gaps which are expected to be experienced in all the regions (Northern, Central and Southern) with the most severe prospects in the southern region.

During the projected period (October 2022-March 2023), prices are expected to trend significantly above the five-year average as urban and rural households will have depleted their own food stocks and face the increased impact of inflation, partly due to the indirect impact of the war in Ukraine. Although official crops estimates show slightly above average maize production compared to the five-year average and lower production than the previous year, prices have remained significantly higher, mostly due to the costs of inputs and global price trends. Maize prices are therefore expected to continue trending significantly above five-year average. The maximum projected price for maize is expected to be at k350 per kilogram although it may be even higher in some markets. The above average prices will likely affect rural and urban households, creating unfavorable financial access to food during the projection period.

Overall, the food security situation in rural and urban areas is expected to deteriorate further due to low production of food staples coupled with expected high prices exacerbated by inflation and the impact of the war in Ukraine.

Key Assumptions

Continued food inflation: with the devaluation and depreciation of the currency, commodity prices are expected to continue rising.

Low irrigated production: Irrigated production is expected to be below average owing to less residual moisture and low uptake of agricultural inputs due their high cost.

Trade: Informal cross border trade will likely be high from neighboring countries due to low production. This will result in scarcities of grain in border districts and will likely push grain prices higher.

Conflict: the war in Ukraine will continue to disrupt the global supply chain resulting in high cost of agricultural inputs, fuel, cooking oil and wheat products. This will in turn increase the cost of production for the irrigated crops during the next agricultural season.

Increase in transportation costs: the devaluation and depreciation of the Malawi Kwacha will continue to increase transportation costs for agricultural inputs and commodities produced and imported within and from neighboring countries.

Seasonal performance: the country is expected to receive normal to above normal rainfall which will likely lead to floods.

Labour migration: Labour migration to neighboring countries is expected to increase more than normal due to removal of COVID restrictions.

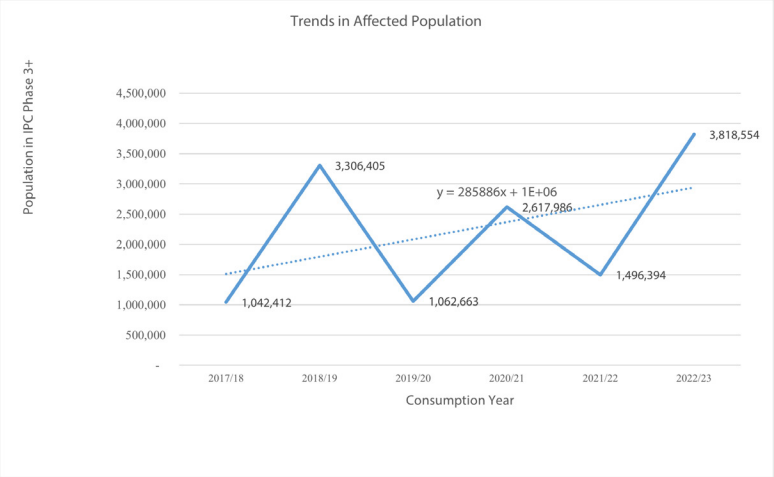
Labour wage and opportunities: Labour opportunities will likely be normal with increased labour rates, however, this will have less value due to increased prices and devaluation of the currency.

Food stocks: Food stocks are expected to be deployed from ADMARC/NFRA when maize prices continue to rise.

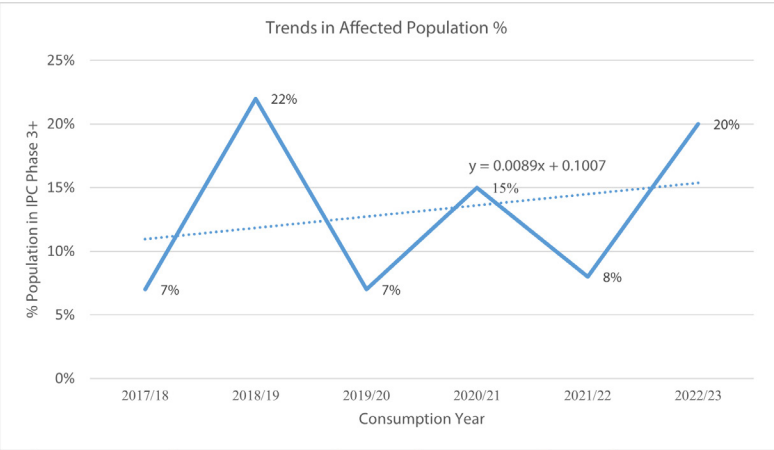
Trends

In comparison with the past five years, this year has the highest number of acutely food insecure population (3,822,502) followed by the 2018/2019 consumption year (3,306,405) and 2021/22 consumption year (1,496,394). The projected acute food insecure populations were the lowest in 2017/18 and 2019/20 consumption years, with 1,042,412 and 1,062,674 people classified in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) or above, respectively. This is mostly attributed to good production seasons in the 2017 and 2019 seasons. In terms of percentages, the 2018/19 consumption year had the highest number of acutely food insecure population with 22% of the population in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) or worse followed by 2022/23 with 20% of the population in IPC Phase 3 or worse. This was followed by 2021/22 consumption year with 8% of the population in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) or worse, while 2017/18 and 2019/20 consumption years registered the lowest populations in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) or worse at 7% of the population. The figure below shows the trend in projected populations in IPC Phase 3 or worse from 2017/18 to 2022/23 consumption years. Generally, there is an upward trend from 2017/18 to 2022/23 consumption years. This is mostly on account of lower agricultural production seasons in 2017 and 2022 seasons resulting from weather-related shocks.

Projected Populations in IPC Phase 3 or above: 2017/18-2022/23



Percent of Projected Population in Phase 3 or above: 2017/18-2022/23



During the past five years, the trend shows that among the three regions, the Southern Region has had the highest acutely food insecure populations, followed by the Central region, while the Northern region has been the least food insecure district. Similarly, this year all 13 districts in the Southern region are projected to be in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis). The trend also shows that the three Southern region districts of Chikwawa, Nsanje and Balaka have been the most food insecure districts in the country, mostly because they are rain shadow areas. Among the three districts, Nsanje has been the most food insecure district, having been projected in IPC Phase 3 in all the five years, followed by Balaka which was projected in IPC Phase 3 in four out of the five years and Chikwawa which was projected in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) in three out of the five years. The situation has deteriorated in the four Central region districts of Lilongwe, Nkhotakota, Ntcheu and Salima, which are projected to be in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis), while during the past five years they have mostly been food secure. This is mostly due to weather-related shocks such as late onset of rains, dry spells and early cessation of rains.

For the projected period, all the four urban zones analyzed (Blantyre, Lilongwe, Mzuzu and Zomba) are projected to be in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) with 627,571 people among the urban population being food insecure, representing 27% of the urban population. This is mainly because people living in urban areas primarily rely on purchases for food, and staple prices are projected to be higher than the five-year average as well as higher than last year due to low production this year. The main drivers for the deteriorating food security situation in the urban areas are high staple prices, high inflation and high transportation costs. Maize prices are higher this year than last year and the five-year average and are projected to trend above the five-year period during the period October 2022 to March 2023. The high cost of fuel will increase the transportation cost of food to markets which will further increase food prices for most urban populations. The war in Ukraine will continue to exert upward pressure on inflation which will affect urban populations the most. This will be exacerbated by the continued depreciation of the Malawi Kwacha against major trading currencies, thereby affecting food access.

Impact of the war in Ukraine on the Malawian Economy

Malawi is a land locked country that depends on neighbouring countries for their import and trade with international markets. All the wheat consumed in Malawi is imported from Russia as well as the fertilizer used. The fertilizer uptake for most of the farming communities was lower than all previous years. The war in Ukraine has resulted in the recent months to a devaluation of the currency by 25%. The Malawi Kwacha was exchanging at 824 per US Dollar in March. By end of June, the Kwacha was exchanging at 1250 per US Dollar. The headline inflation rate (year over year) for May 2022 stood at 19.1 percent. Food and Non Food Inflation rates were at 25.5 and 13.2 percent respectively. Fuel prices have significantly increased from 850 MK to 2000 MK for a liter of petrol. The ripple effect of the fuel price change has been witnessed in the currently soaring prices of food staples.

COMPARISON WITH CHRONIC FOOD INSECURITY CLASSIFICATION

Key linkages and complementarities exist between this year's acute food insecurity classification and the chronic food insecurity results.

Two districts (Chikwawa and Nsanje) out of the three severely chronically food insecure (IPC CFI Level 4) districts in the country (Balaka, Chikwawa and Nsanje), have been classified in IPC CFI Phase 3 (Severe), with 25 percent of their populations in IPC AFI Phase 3 (Crisis) or worse. Similarly, although Balaka has been classified in IPC AFI Phase 2 (Stressed) and IPC CFI Level 4 (Severe), it has about 15% of the population in IPC AFI Phase 3 or worse. During the projected period, all the three districts are classified in IPC AFI Phase 3 with 30% of their population in IPC AFI Phase 3 (Crisis). This shows that these districts are both acutely and chronically food insecure. This is because these districts are rain shadow areas and therefore experience major climatic shocks, especially prolonged dry spells and floods year in year out. Similarly, the two Northern region districts (Likoma and Nkhatabay) with the lowest chronic food insecurity (IPC CFI level 2 – Mild) have been classified in IPC AFI Phases 1 (Minimal) and 2 (Stressed), respectively, and are both projected to be in IPC AFI Phase 2 during the October 2022 – March 2023 period. This depicts a situation of both low acute and low chronic food insecurity. The remaining districts projected to be moderately chronically food insecure (IPC CFI Level 3) are also projected to be acutely food insecure (IPC Level 3 - Crisis). However, there is no district with high chronic food insecurity and low acute food insecurity. The main driver for both acute and chronic food insecurity is recurrent weather-related hazards and stresses, which reduce food production in the country, and dependence on low value livelihood strategies such as casual labour and petty trade.

The southern region of Malawi has high levels of poverty as a result of persistent exposure to shocks such as floods and drought. These factors have eroded the livelihoods of households, further compounding the poverty levels. The majority of households depend on staple production, and the lack diversification in sources of income and food make them more vulnerable to shocks year in year out.

Key for the Map

IPC Acute Food Insecurity Phase Classification

(mapped Phase represents highest severity affecting at least 20% of the population)

- 1 - Minimal
- 2 - Stressed
- 3 - Crisis
- 4 - Emergency
- 5 - Famine

Evidence Level

*** High

Key for the Map

IPC Chronic Food Insecurity Level Classification

(mapped Level represents highest severity affecting at least 20% of the population)

- 1 - None
- 2 - Mild
- 3 - Moderate
- 4 - Severe
- Areas with inadequate evidence
- Areas not analysed

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Response Priorities

1. Humanitarian response for populations in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) or above should commence in November 2022 starting with the most affected districts for five months, to protect livelihoods and reduce food consumption gaps by improving access to food, through appropriate modalities for households in urban areas. For other districts, the humanitarian response should commence in December 2022 for four months, followed by the least affected districts which should receive humanitarian assistance for three months starting from January 2023.
2. Promote resilience/climate-smart agricultural production for disaster-risk reduction and to protect the livelihoods of the population in IPC Phases 1 (Non/Minimal) and 2 (Stressed).
3. Ensure continuous monitoring of staple and other commodity prices.
4. ADMARC should stock adequate maize to stabilize maize prices.
5. Mount campaigns to promote dietary diversification among communities to improve poor consumption patterns elicited by MVAC assessments for populations in all IPC Phases.
6. Improve the delivery of the Agricultural Input Programme to increase input uptake for smallholder farmers
7. Restrict informal cross-border maize trade by monitoring unchartered routes to control grain availability and prices.
8. Improve the macroeconomic environment by stabilizing the exchange rate and controlling inflation.

Situation Monitoring and Update

- Maize prices: Maize prices are projected to be significantly above the five-year average high due to low production and high demand from foreign and other Sub-Saharan African countries. Currently, maize prices are trending higher than the five-year average.
- Irrigated crops: Production will be lower than the previous season because of high inflation, translating to high costs of agricultural inputs and lower rainfall, translating to less residual moisture for winter production.
- Floods: High-prone areas in the lower shire districts need to be monitored, especially in December and January. Other districts like Karonga in the Northern region and Salima in the Central region have also been experiencing floods in the previous five years.

Risk factors to monitor

- **Price shocks:** the general price increase of food and non-food commodities will pose a risk to households in terms of food access due to loss of purchasing power and unstable supply of commodities on both local and international markets.
- **Conflict:** the war in Ukraine will continue to exert pressure on the prices of food and non-food commodities thereby eroding the purchasing power of the affected households.
- **Floods:** a normal to above normal rain forecast poses a risk of floods in prone areas that may result in losses of crops, animals and shelter.

PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY

The IPC AFI Analysis workshop happened from 27 June to 6 July 2021 and was a hybrid workshop including both virtual and face to face participation. A total of 40 participants attended this analysis, some virtual and the majority of government participants were at the venue. These included representatives from the ministries of agriculture, livestock and water development, economic planning and development, HIV and Nutrition section of Ministry of transport, National Statistics Office, WFP, FAO, United Purpose, CEPA, CONCERN Worldwide and Save the Children. The analysis included a decentralized pilot for five districts namely Mzimba, Ntchisi, Mangochi, Mwanza and Nsanje whose officers independently did the analysis in ISS in their respective districts.

Analysts were split into four regions (North, Central, East and South) with each district being independently analyzed but compared with the neighboring districts in the same region.

Upon completion of entries into the ISS, the technical consensus process involved each region presenting their results reviewed by the facilitators, vetting of the results and the plenary discussion before the team integrated comments and closed the analysis.

The draft report was developed by the MVAC secretariat and forwarded to the Government for endorsement. However, to have buy-in, a discussion was conducted at the districts level with main stakeholders (NGOs, government departments, representative from community) to discuss the results of the analysis before the Humanitarian Response Committee begins to deliberate of the development of the Lean Season Integrated Response Programme.

Sources

The MVAC TWG conducted an Annual Assessment and Analysis from May to June 2022. This year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a huge challenge in getting the entire TWG to participate in the surveys because of restrictions by agencies. However, the government provided the necessary conditions to enable a small team to go to the field and conduct data collection with strict observation of Ministry of Health COVID-19 guidelines. The main surveys undertaken were: HEA data collection, rural household food security survey and urban food security survey. Other complementing surveys were done by FAO and WFP.

The main data sources used for this analysis include: Household Food Security Survey, Agricultural Crop Production Estimates (APES), Market Survey, Price Projections (FEWSNET), Price data Ministry of Agriculture (Agricultural Market Information System- AMIS), mVAM data from WFP, National Statistics Office (population) and District Food Security reports, Smart survey (Unicef).

Limitations of the analysis

This year's process faced several challenges: first, the funding for activities was minimal and many delays in confirming availability of funds were accumulated. Several agencies save for government participants could not participate in person at the analysis posing a challenge for proper discussions during consensus-building coupled with internet connectivity challenges for those who were joining virtually. In terms of analysis requirement, the Level of evidence of this analysis, as defined by the IPC protocols, was assessed as High Evidence Level (Evidence Level 3).

What is the IPC and IPC Acute Food Insecurity?

The IPC is a set of tools and procedures to classify the severity and characteristics of acute food and nutrition crises as well as chronic food insecurity based on international standards. The IPC consists of four mutually reinforcing functions, each with a set of specific protocols (tools and procedures). The core IPC parameters include consensus building, convergence of evidence, accountability, transparency and comparability. The IPC analysis aims at informing emergency response as well as medium and long-term food security policy and programming.

For the IPC, Acute Food Insecurity is defined as any manifestation of food insecurity found in a specified area at a specific point in time of a severity that threatens lives or livelihoods, or both, regardless of the causes, context or duration. It is highly susceptible to change and can occur and manifest in a population within a short amount of time, as a result of sudden changes or shocks that negatively impact on the determinants of food insecurity.

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Classification of food insecurity and malnutrition was conducted using the IPC protocols, which are developed and implemented worldwide by the IPC Global Partnership - Action Against Hunger, CARE, CILSS, EC-JRC , FAO, FEWSNET, Global Food Security Cluster, Global Nutrition Cluster, IGAD, Oxfam, PROGRESAN-SICA, SADC, Save the Children, UNICEF and WFP.

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