MALAWI

IPC ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY ANALYSIS JULY 2021 – MARCH 2022

Issued August 2021

MALAWI'S ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY PERSISTS DUE TO COVID-19, DRY SPELLS AND FLOODS

CURRENT JULY - SEPTEMBER 2021

1.06M

6% 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	1, 065, 000 People in Crisis
Phase 2	3, 603, 000 People Stressed
Phase 1	14, 160, 000 People in food security

PROJECTED OCTOBER 2021 - MARCH 2022

1.49M

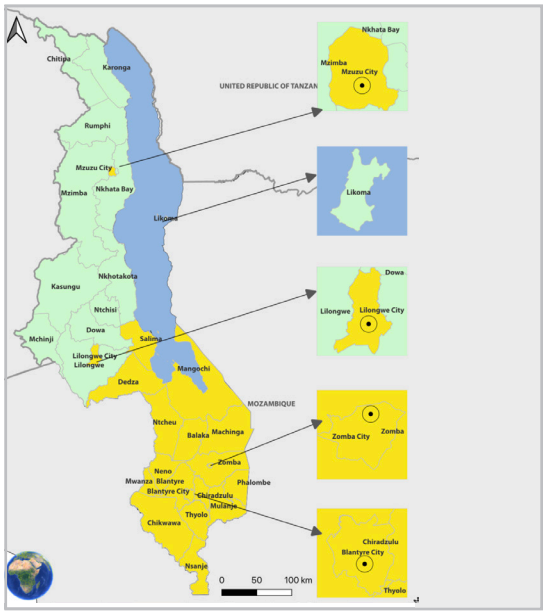
8% of the population analysed

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	1, 496, 000 People in Crisis
Phase 2	4, 494, 000 People Stressed
Phase 1	12, 746, 000 People in food security

Current Situation July - September 2021



Key for the Map

IPC Acute Food Insecurity Phase Classification

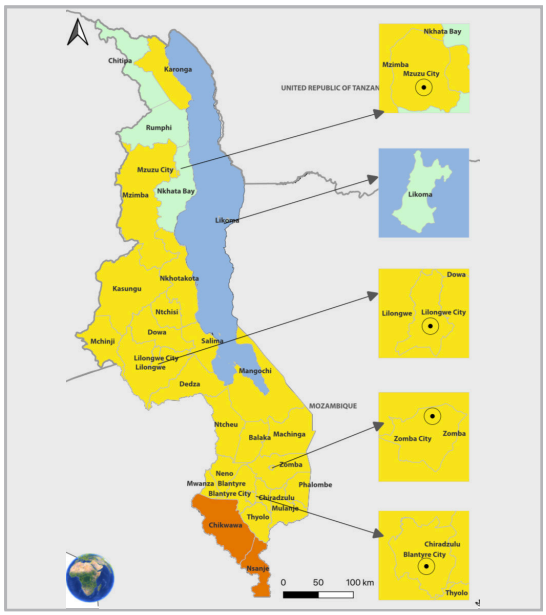
(mapped Phase represents highest severity affecting at least 20% of the population)

- 3 - Crisis
- 4 - Emergency
- 5 - Famine
- Areas with inadequate evidence
- Areas not analysed

Map Symbols

- Urban settlement classification

Projected Situation October 2021 - March 2022



Overview

Over 1 million people in Malawi are experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity, classified in Crisis (IPC Phase between July and September 2021. Despite Malawi's record high maize production of 46% above the five-year average, some pockets in these districts and cities experienced severe dry spells and earlier than normal tailing of rainfall. This led to localized production shortfalls coupled with the impact of COVID-19 on remittances, petty trade and self-employment activities. The population experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity require urgent action to reduce food gaps, protect and restore livelihoods and prevent acute malnutrition. Around 3.6 million people are classified in Stressed (IPC Phase 2), experiencing a mild level of food insecurity, while 14.1 million people are food secure-- Minimal (IPC Phase 1). All the four urban zones analyzed (Blantyre, Lilongwe, Mzuzu, Zomba) are classified in IPC Phase 2 (Stressed) while the rural areas are in IPC Phase 2 (Stressed) – 16 areas out of the 28 analyzed - or in IPC Phase 1 (none/minimal).

In the projection period, October 2021 to March 2022, around 1.5 million (8% of the population) are likely to be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) acute food insecurity. 4.49 million people are projected to be in Stressed (IPC Phase 2), while 12.75 million people are likely to be classified in Minimal acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 1). For this period, only the two districts of Nsanje and Chikwawa are projected to be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3), the rest being classified in IPC Phase 2 (Stressed) or in IPC Phase 1 (none/minimal) like Chitipa, Likoma, Nkhatabay and Rumphi districts. Out of the 1.5 million people projected in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) acute food insecurity, 186 000 live in urban settings and more than 1.3 million in rural areas.

Key Drivers

Dry Spells

In Southern Malawi, Nsanje, Mulanje and Chikwawa districts and parts of Thyolo, Phalombe, Balaka, Mwanza, Neno, Zomba, and Chiradzulu districts experienced localized dry spells and early cessation of rainfall, which resulted in low production

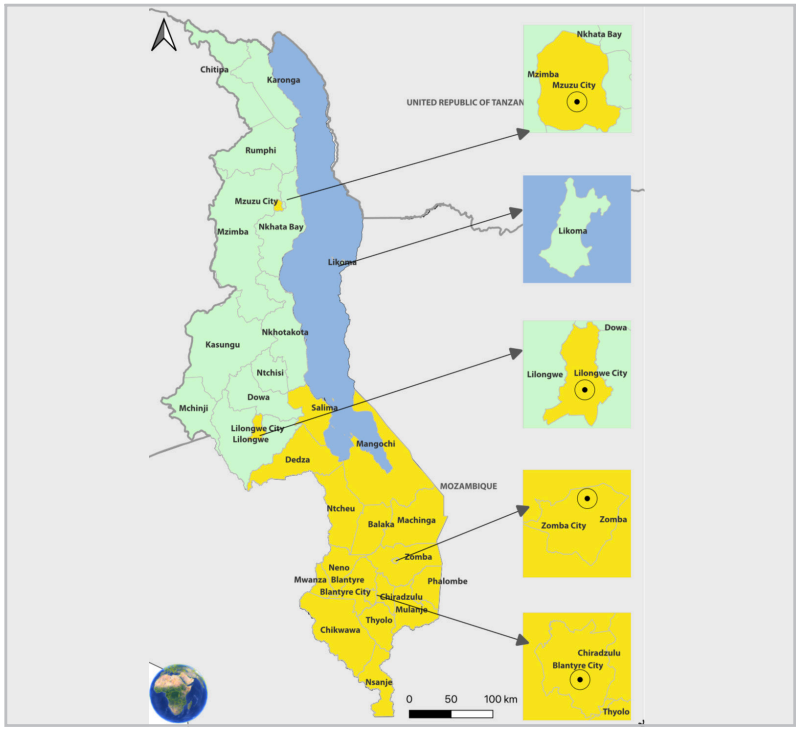
COVID-19

Despite not locking down Malawi, the country has registered job losses and a shortfall in remittances due to COVID-19, affecting the informal labour market, accounting for over 50% of income sources employed, especially in the bomas.

Flooding

Parts of Rumphi and Karonga districts in In northern Malawi experienced flooding and waterlogging that damaged crops between January and February 2021 early in the cropping season

CURRENT SITUATION MAP AND POPULATION TABLE (July - September 2021)



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- Areas not analysed

Map Symbols

- Urban settlement classification

District	IPC Phase	Total population analysed	Phase 1		Phase 2		Phase 3		Phase 4		Phase 5		Phase 3+	
			#people	%	#people	%	#people	%		%	#people	%	#people	%
Balaka	2	477380	334166	70	95476	20	47738	10	0	0	0	0	47738	10
Blantyre	2	485912	291547	60	145774	30	48591	10	0	0	0	0	48591	10
Blantyre city	2	844161	506497	60	295456	35	42208	5	0	0	0	0	42208	5
Chikhwawa	2	603037	391974	65	120607	20	90456	15	0	0	0	0	90456	15
Chiradzulu	2	377103	263972	70	94276	25	18855	5	0	0	0	0	18855	5
Chitipa	1	247514	222763	90	24751	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dedza	2	889017	711214	80	177803	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dowa	1	835919	710531	85	83592	10	41796	5	0	0	0	0	41796	5
Karonga	1	388780	349902	90	38878	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kasungu	1	906926	770887	85	90693	10	45346	5	0	0	0	0	45346	5
Likoma	1	15391	13852	90	1539	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lilongwe	1	1753299	1490304	85	175330	10	87665	5	0	0	0	0	87665	5
Lilongwe city	2	1021699	715189	70	204340	20	102170	10	0	0	0	0	102170	10
Machinga	2	816370	571459	70	163274	20	81637	10	0	0	0	0	81637	10
Mangochi	2	1264737	822079	65	316184	25	126474	10	0	0	0	0	126474	10
Mchinji	1	644457	547788	85	64446	10	32223	5	0	0	0	0	32223	5
Mulanje	2	733068	513148	70	183267	25	36653	5	0	0	0	0	36653	5
Mwanza	2	143578	100505	70	35895	25	7179	5	0	0	0	0	7179	5
Mzimba	1	986294	838350	85	147944	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mzuzu city	2	250577	175404	70	75173	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Neno	2	147272	73636	50	66272	45	7364	5	0	0	0	0	7364	5
Nkhata bay	1	299493	254569	85	44924	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nkhotakota	1	419594	356655	85	62939	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nsanje	2	316123	189674	60	94837	30	31612	10	0	0	0	0	31612	10
Ntcheu	2	716432	501502	70	179108	25	35822	5	0	0	0	0	35822	5
Ntchisi	1	346154	294231	85	51923	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Phalombe	2	465592	325914	70	93118	20	46559	10	0	0	0	0	46559	10
Rumphi	1	243811	219430	90	24381	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Salima	2	521186	416949	80	104237	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Thyolo	2	759062	607250	80	113859	15	37953	5	0	0	0	0	37953	5
Zomba	2	795548	517106	65	198887	25	79555	10	0	0	0	0	79555	10
Zomba city	2	112121	61667	55	33636	30	16818	15	0	0	0	0	16818	15
Grand Total		**18827607**	**14160113**	**75**	**3602821**	**19**	**1064674**	**6**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1064674**	**6**

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, and thus, they may be in need of continued action.

CURRENT SITUATION OVERVIEW (July - September 2021)

In the current period of analysis, 1.06 million people (representing 6% of the population analyzed) are facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) acute food insecurity and 3.6 million (19%) mild acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 2). 75% of the population is food secure, and most of the districts analyzed (urban or rural) are classified in IPC Phase 2. All the districts in the Northern region (save for Mzuzu city) are in IPC Phase 1, and some districts in the Central region act as bread baskets for the other districts. In the Southern region, all the districts are classified in Stressed (IPC Phase 2).

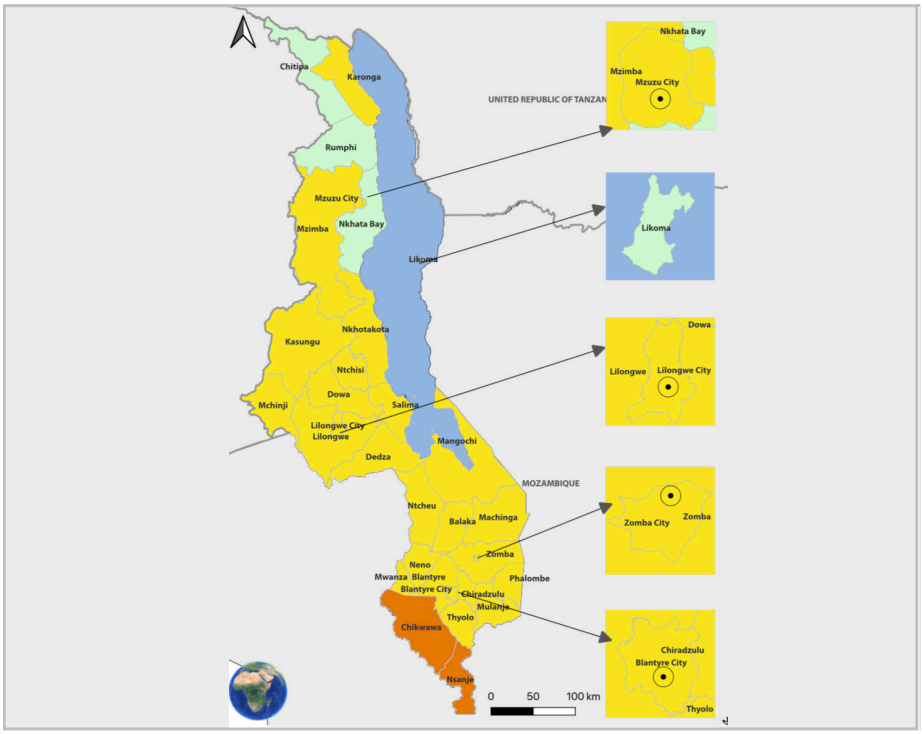
The main reason for this relatively good situation is the good maize production performance: in the current period, national 2020/21 production of maize is 46% above the five-year average production resulting in a total maize surplus at the national level close to 1.2 million Metric Tonnes (MT). At the national level, the maize prices are significantly lower by between 16% and 36% compared to June 2020 and by 9% to 23% compared to the five-year average. In the South, the prices nevertheless appear higher, averaging K145 per kilogram, followed by the northern regions, at K143 per kilogram. In the centre, these prices remain at the lowest, at an average of K115 per kilogram.

The 1.06 million people classified in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) are households living in pockets in rural areas that experienced a deficit in production due to dry spells (like in the southern regions) or to floods that damaged crops at the vegetative stages (in northern or central regions). For these households, the level of stocks remains low, forcing them to rely on the market for their food supply.

In the urban areas, despite the level of prices remain low, the covid-19 crisis has limited the job opportunities and consequently source of income, especially for people working in the informal sector or depending on manual jobs. With the covid-19 pandemic, the remittances from neighbouring countries have also decreased due to transport limitations between countries.

During the 2020 year, the Humanitarian Food Assistance (HFA) was no significant despite the Covid-19 pandemic. However, there were efforts by the government and partners to support poor households in urban areas through the Covid-19 Urban Cash Intervention (CUCI) programme.

PROJECTED SITUATION MAP AND POPULATION TABLE (October 2021 - March 2022)



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Likoma	1	15391	13082	85	1539	10	770	5	0	0	0	0	770	5
Lilongwe	2	1753299	1227309	70	438325	25	87665	5	0	0	0	0	87665	5
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Grand Total		**18827607**	**12837059**	**68**	**4494154**	**24**	**1496394**	**8**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1496394**	**8**

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PROJECTED SITUATION OVERVIEW (October 2021 - March 2022)

Between October 2021 and March 2022, which coincides with the lean season in Malawi, Chikhwawa and Nsanje districts are likely to move from a Stressed (IPC Phase 2) food acute insecurity in the current period of analysis to Crisis (IPC Phase 3) with respectively 20% of their population in IPC Phase 3. At the national level, about 1.5 million people (8% of Malawi population) are projected to face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) food insecurity and need humanitarian assistance. Most of these people (approximately 1.25 million) live in rural areas, while 186,000 are located in the four urban cities and the district towns (bomas) analyzed. These households mostly live in areas that experienced localized low levels of crop production and are affected by the impacts of the covid-19 pandemic that will continue, in the projected period, to primarily affect the urban poor and rural households.

Cereal stocks at the household level will generally be above average in high producing areas throughout the country due to above-average national crop production. However, shortfalls will be experienced in parts of southern Malawi, especially Chikhwawa and Nsanje. Households in these areas will likely experience some food gaps, especially at the peak of the lean season in January and February 2022.

Between October 2021 and March 2022, prices are expected to increase following seasonal trends as households deplete their stocks and face the increased impact of the Covid-19 for urban and rural households. Given above average national opening stocks for the 2021 marketing year and 46% above average maize production in the 2020/21 production year, it is projected that maize prices will not likely reach the maximum projected price of K250 per kilogram. This will likely affect the rural population more as they mostly rely on cereal sales throughout the consumption period. With reduced income from self-employment activities and loss of jobs or small businesses due to the impact of COVID-19 in all these areas, below-average maize prices are expected at least to provide favorable financial access to food by these households. The food security situation is not likely to deteriorate further in urban areas during the projection period due to the country's good crop production. Although no significant movement restrictions are in place during the projected period, there is a possibility of a surge in COVID-19 cases, which would impact labour opportunities in urban areas.

The trend of confirmed COVID-19 cases between April 2020 and July 2021 seems to be three months cycles in the surge of confirmed cases. COVID-19 cases are therefore expected to rise between January and February 2022 as it did in January and February 2021. This will likely lead to a slowdown in petty trading and self-employment activities and hence reduced income levels. The situation will likely be mitigated by lower maize price levels expected during the same period and a slight increase in the number of people experiencing consumption gaps. Of the projected population that will be food insecure in the projected period, 12.44% comprises those from the country's four major cities and district towns (bomas).

Key Assumptions for the projected period

Labour opportunities and wages for poorer households in all rural areas are likely to remain within normal ranges, while urban centres may slightly reduce because of Covid-19 pandemic effects.

Food Availability: Maize grain supplies are expected to remain stable across markets in both surplus and deficit producing areas. In the coming months, macroeconomic conditions are likely to continue deteriorating due to severe currency shortages. Depreciation of the kwacha is expected to continue as the market for Malawi's primary forex earner, tobacco, is coming to an end, and the overall outputs were already lower this season.

Loss of employment and income resulting from Covid-19 effects, coupled with rising food costs, will likely continue making it difficult for many urban households to access food easily.

Informal cross border inflows, mainly from Zambia, Tanzania and Mozambique, are expected to be below average considering significantly above average local production

Maize prices are expected to trend at levels 5%-10% lower than the five-year average prices throughout the projection period.

Labour migration to neighbouring districts of Malawi and Zambia, and Mozambique is expected to be less than average during the scenario period if internal movement in Malawi and its neighbouring Zambia and Mozambique remain restricted.

Impact of COVID-19: Agricultural labour opportunities will likely be below average at the national level resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic within normal ranges.

Remittances: Many Malawians receive remittances from relatives working in other countries, particularly in South Africa. Remittances are expected to decrease as restrictions in South Africa continue in respect of the new COVID-19 variant.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

Response Priorities

- · Humanitarian response should commence in December as recommended by MVAC to save lives, reduce food consumption gaps and protect livelihoods for populations in Crisis (IPC Phase 3).

· Actions should be undertaken to reduce food consumption gaps by improving access to food, through appropriate modalities for household in urban areas.

· Price monitoring for staple and other commodities should continue.

· Campaigns to promote dietary diversification among communities to improve poor consumption patterns elicited by MVAC assessments should be organised.

· Resilience/climate smart agricultural production should be promoted.

· ADMARC should make deliberate efforts to buy from farmers as soon as the post-harvest season commences so that they benefit from its set fair prices and thus avoid exploitative prices offered by private traders.

Situation Monitoring and Update

- COVID-19 Cases: Covid-19 is one of the contributing factors to limitations of income-generating activities and loss of employment and consequently needs to be monitored.

· Maize Prices: Maize prices are not expected to go above the highest projected price of MK225 per KG, but it will be necessary to monitor this evolution closely.

· Irrigation Estimates: Irrigation prospects are high this year due to increased moisture and irrigable land

· Floods: floods prone areas like lower Shire Districts need to be monitored, especially in December and January.

PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY

The IPC AFI Analysis workshop happened from 26 to 30 July 2021 and was a hybrid workshop including both virtual and face-to-face participation. A total of 50 participants attended this analysis, some virtually and most government participants were at the venue. These including 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, Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA), WFP, FAO, FEWSNET, Go Malawi, Save the Children and USAID.

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

Upon completing entries into the ISS, the technical consensus process involved each region presenting their results and reviewing by the facilitators, vetting 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, representatives from the community) to discuss the analysis results before the Humanitarian Response Committee begins to deliberate on the development of the Lean Season Integrated Response Programme.

Sources

The MVAC TWG conducted an Annual Assessment and Analysis from May to June. This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a significant challenge in obtaining full participation of TWG 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 primary surveys undertaken were: HEA data collection, rural household food security survey and urban food security survey. FAO and WFP did other complementing surveys.

The main data sources used for this analysis include Household Food Security Survey, Agricultural.

Crop Production Estimates (APES), Market Survey, HEA analysis and Price Projections (FEWSNET), Price data Ministry of Agriculture (Agricultural Market Information System-AMIS), mVAM data from WFP, National Statistics Office (population), HEA analysis 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 there were delays in confirming the availability of funds. The COVID-19 pandemic was also a challenge in undertaking full-scale assessment in the field due to the restrictions and suspension of meetings/workshops. As a result, 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 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.

Contact for further Information

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This analysis has been conducted under the patronage of the MVAC (e.g. Ministry of Agriculture). It has benefited from the technical and financial support of FAO/GSU for the analysis and USAID for data collection.

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.