

Madagascar – Drought & Tropical Cyclone

DECEMBER 22, 2023

SITUATION AT A GLANCE

30.3 MILLION	2.3 MILLION	1.3 MILLION	226,000	85,000
Estimated Population of Madagascar	Estimated Population in Need of Assistance in the Grand Sud and Grand Sud-Est	Estimated Population Facing Acute Food Insecurity	Estimated Number of People Adversely Affected by Tropical Cyclone Freddy	Estimated Number of People Temporarily Displaced by Cyclones in 2023
<i>UN – December 2023</i>	<i>UN – October 2023</i>	<i>IPC – December 2023</i>	<i>UN – March 2023</i>	<i>BNGRC – February 2023</i>

- Despite the delivery of emergency food assistance, poor and very poor households in Madagascar's Grand Sud and Grand Sud-Est regions are likely to experience Crisis—IPC 3—or worse levels of acute food insecurity through January 2024 primarily due to depleted food stocks, and lack of access to agricultural production.
- Prolonged drought in the Grand Sud and consecutive tropical cyclones in the Grand Sud-Est, coupled with the threat of El Niño-induced climate extremes, have severely impacted agricultural production, food security, and infrastructure in the regions.
- The UN released a revised flash appeal for Grand Sud and Grand Sud-Est in November, requesting \$162.2 million to meet immediate humanitarian needs and mitigate the effects of El Niño for 1.6 million people.



¹ FY 2024 funding for the Madagascar Drought and Tropical Cyclone response will be included in future products when committed/obligated. For information on the U.S. Government (USG)'s funding toward the response in FY 2023, refer to the Madagascar Drought and Tropical Cyclone Fact Sheet #3 released on September 30, 2023, available on the USAID website at <https://www.usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work>

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Acute Food Insecurity Continues in Grand Sud and Grand Sud-Est Despite Assistance

Populations in Madagascar's Grand Sud and Grand Sud-Est regions are projected to face Crisis—IPC 3— food insecurity outcomes between November 2023 and January 2024, despite emergency food assistance efforts, according to a November Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWS NET) analysis.¹ Poor and very poor households, comprising most of the population in these regions, have depleted their stored food stocks. With limited access to agricultural and self-employment incomes due to cyclonic damage, these households are dependent on markets where prices are seasonally high and gradually increasing. Agricultural labor opportunities, including off-season rice and cash crop harvests, reached their seasonal peak as of November 2023, providing some additional income for poor households in these regions. However, low wages and the damage to agricultural fields from cyclones over the past two years have significantly reduced overall cash crop production. Though emergency food assistance remains ongoing in affected areas, relief actors remain concerned regarding Crisis outcomes, especially in the Grand Sud's Ambovombe, Ampanihy, Beloha, and Tsihombe and Grand Sud-Est's Midongy-du-Sud districts during the projected period, according to FEWS NET. By February 2024, significant humanitarian aid is anticipated to improve outcomes to Stressed—IPC 2!—in Grand Sud's Amboasary Sud, Betioky, and Befotaka, as well as Grand Sud-Est's Ikongo and Nosy Varika districts.² In addition to humanitarian food and cash distributions, FEWS NET reports that the distributions of seeds, vines, and other agricultural inputs, which began in November, are expected to continue through December, with around 170,000 individuals targeted for assistance.

El Niño Conditions Threaten Agricultural Outcomes in Areas Still Recovering From Cyclonic Damage

Prolonged drought from 2020 to 2022 in the Grand Sud and consecutive tropical cyclones in late 2022 and early 2023 in the Grand Sud-Est have severely hindered agricultural production and food security as of November, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Furthermore, the threat of El Niño-induced climate extremes is likely to exacerbate the situation. Reduced cultivated areas and limited access to agricultural inputs in Grand Sud resulted in below-average outcomes for the 2022/2023 main agricultural season, with the delayed onset of rains leading to late planting for at least 60 percent of households in the region, FAO reports. Reduced harvests have also led to depleted household food stocks and worsening food insecurity, which could prompt households to adopt harmful coping mechanisms, such as migrating, reducing the number of daily meals, and selling livestock. Multiple cyclones in early 2023 severely damaged the agriculture, livestock, and fisheries sector in the Grand Sud-Est, affecting crops like rice, cassava, and sweet potatoes, along with cash crops such as coffee and cloves, while fishers experienced substantial income losses due to destroyed boats, equipment, and infrastructure, coupled with unfavorable weather conditions preventing fishing.

Ongoing El Niño conditions are likely to result in below-average agricultural production through April 2024, necessitating close monitoring of rainfall and cyclone predictions that could affect infrastructure and crop production. Drought conditions affecting the most crop cycles are likely in most of southern Africa at the start of the rainy season, peaking between December 2023 and February 2024, according to an October UN report. Forecasted high rainfall may trigger floods in eastern Madagascar, resulting in

¹The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) is a multi-partner initiative that developed a standardized scale to classify the severity and magnitude of food insecurity. The IPC scale, which is comparable across countries and time, ranges from Minimal—IPC 1—to Famine—IPC 5—for acute food insecurity.

²An "!" indicates that the phase classification would likely be worse without current or planned humanitarian assistance.

population displacement, as well as damage or destruction of houses, crops and livestock, and infrastructure, the UN reports. Though forecasts predict fewer cyclones in Madagascar between December 2023 and March 2024, threats of cyclone-related flooding and associated impacts remain. Moreover, past El Niño events have led to an increase in vector and water-borne diseases like cholera, malaria, and dengue fever in Madagascar, increasing the risk of similar disease outbreaks during the current El Niño season, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

UN Revises Flash Appeal for Grand Sud and Grand Sud-Est Amid Continued Needs

The UN released a revised flash appeal for Madagascar’s Grand Sud and Grand Sud-Est on November 20, 2023 following a previous revision in March 2023 after Tropical Cyclone Freddy. The newly revised appeal targets 1.6 million people and requests \$162.2 million to meet needs for an immediate humanitarian response. The new target marks a decrease from the nearly 2 million people targeted in the March 2023 revision, but the appeal notes continued needs despite the decrease. Unlike the March appeal, the new revision includes anticipatory actions designed to mitigate below-average rainfall and resultant lower agricultural yields prompted by El Niño during the November 2023–April 2024 rainy season. The revised appeal includes assistance within the food, health, nutrition, protection, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) sectors.

The revised appeal targets 1.5 million people with food assistance due to the lower amounts of precipitation expected in southern Madagascar, which will likely reduce agricultural production and exacerbate food insecurity. Health conditions in the region have improved slightly, which may be due to increased health center attendance as of October 2023, the UN reports. Needs for maternal and neonatal health services, malaria prevention, and vaccination coverage remain high, and the UN is targeting 238,000 individuals for related health interventions. Relatedly, the UN is targeting more than 1 million people with nutrition assistance in response to heightened nutrition needs in Grand Sud, which had concerning rates of global acute malnutrition in the March appeal. The revised appeal targets 251,000 people with protection assistance due to the scarcity of goods resulting in protection-related coping mechanisms, such as child labor, forced marriages, and survival sex, the UN reports. The revision also plans to provide WASH assistance to 700,000 individuals due to drought conditions and concerning water availability in southern Madagascar.

KEY FIGURES



516,000

People received emergency food assistance from WFP with USAID/BHA and other donor support in October 2024

U.S. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

USAID/BHA-supported food assistance and nutrition programming in southern Madagascar reaches communities experiencing acute food insecurity and wasting—the deadliest form of malnutrition—due to the ongoing, multi-year drought and other drivers, such as climatic shocks and high global food prices. USAID/BHA partner the UN World Food Program (WFP) delivers in-kind food assistance and cash transfers to address pervasive food insecurity and malnutrition. With USAID/BHA and other donor support, WFP reached 516,000 food-insecure people in Madagascar with food and nutrition support during October alone, delivering more than \$65,000 in cash-based transfers and nearly 900 metric tons of in-kind food



5

Number of USG partners actively implementing critical Agricultural interventions

assistance (or food commodities).

AGRICULTURE AND LIVELIHOODS

USAID/BHA funds partners including the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), Action Contre la Faim (ACF), Catholic Relief Services (CRS), IPC, and FAO to strengthen agricultural recovery and rehabilitate livelihoods in the wake of climatic shocks among drought- and storm-affected communities in the Grand Sud and Grand Sud Est. USAID/BHA partners ADRA and CRS provide agricultural assistance to affected households in the form of crop seeds, farming tools, and training to improve agricultural production. With USAID/BHA support, FAO is building technical capacity in climate-smart agriculture, in addition to providing farming tools, small livestock production support, and vegetable seeds. FAO continues to support vulnerable households through the distribution of cash, planting materials, and seeds, as well as the installation of solar irrigation systems, and distribution of poultry and animal feed.



4

Number of USG partners actively implementing critical WASH interventions

WASH

USAID/BHA continues to support ADRA, ACF, Doctors of the World (MDM), and the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) in implementing water, WASH interventions that help prevent the spread of communicable diseases and reduce the prevalence of wasting among southern Madagascar’s storm-affected populations. USAID/BHA-supported WASH activities improve drought-affected populations’ access to safe drinking water across southern Madagascar. USAID/BHA partner UNICEF provides life-saving WASH assistance in southern Madagascar to mitigate the impact of drought, including through reconversion of existing water points for expanded utility and delivery of WASH kits comprising items such as soap and water containers.



3

Number of USG partners actively implementing critical Protection interventions

PROTECTION

USAID/BHA partners with CRS, MDM, and the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) to implement critical protection activities, including gender-based violence (GBV)-related prevention and response services and protection awareness campaigns among humanitarian response partners and stakeholders in the Grand Sud and Grand Sud-Est. USAID/BHA-supported UNFPA programming improves vulnerable populations’ access to information on preventing GBV and sexual exploitation and abuse and supporting individual rights, as well as access to protection mechanisms, including complaint procedures and psychosocial support.

CONTEXT IN BRIEF

- Madagascar is susceptible to numerous natural disasters and shocks—including disease outbreaks, drought, floods, pest infestations, sandstorms, and tropical cyclones—that disrupt livelihoods and force households to adopt negative coping mechanisms to survive, leaving them more susceptible to future climatic shocks. Southern Madagascar is particularly susceptible to recurrent drought conditions that lead to poor harvests and decreased livestock productivity.
- Lean seasons—the periods between harvests when household food stocks are low—have lasted longer in recent years across southern Madagascar’s Androy, Anosy, and Atsimo-Andrefana regions, according to WFP, where populations have faced some of the most extreme drought since 1981, resulting in rapidly deteriorating food security and nutrition conditions, the UN reports.
- On October 30, 2023, U.S. Ambassador to Madagascar Claire Pierangelo issued a redeclaration of humanitarian need in response to the continued effects of cyclones, ongoing drought, and persistent food insecurity.

PUBLIC DONATION INFORMATION

- The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations. A list of humanitarian organizations that are accepting cash donations for disaster responses around the world can be found at [interaction.org](https://www.interaction.org).
- USAID encourages cash donations because they allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed, often in the affected region; reduce the burden on scarce resources, such as transportation routes, staff time, and warehouse space; can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; and ensure culturally, dietarily, and environmentally appropriate assistance.
- More information can be found at:
 - USAID Center for International Disaster Information: [cidi.org](https://www.cidi.org)
 - Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at [reliefweb.int](https://www.reliefweb.int).

USAID/BHA bulletins appear on the USAID website at [usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work](https://www.usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work)